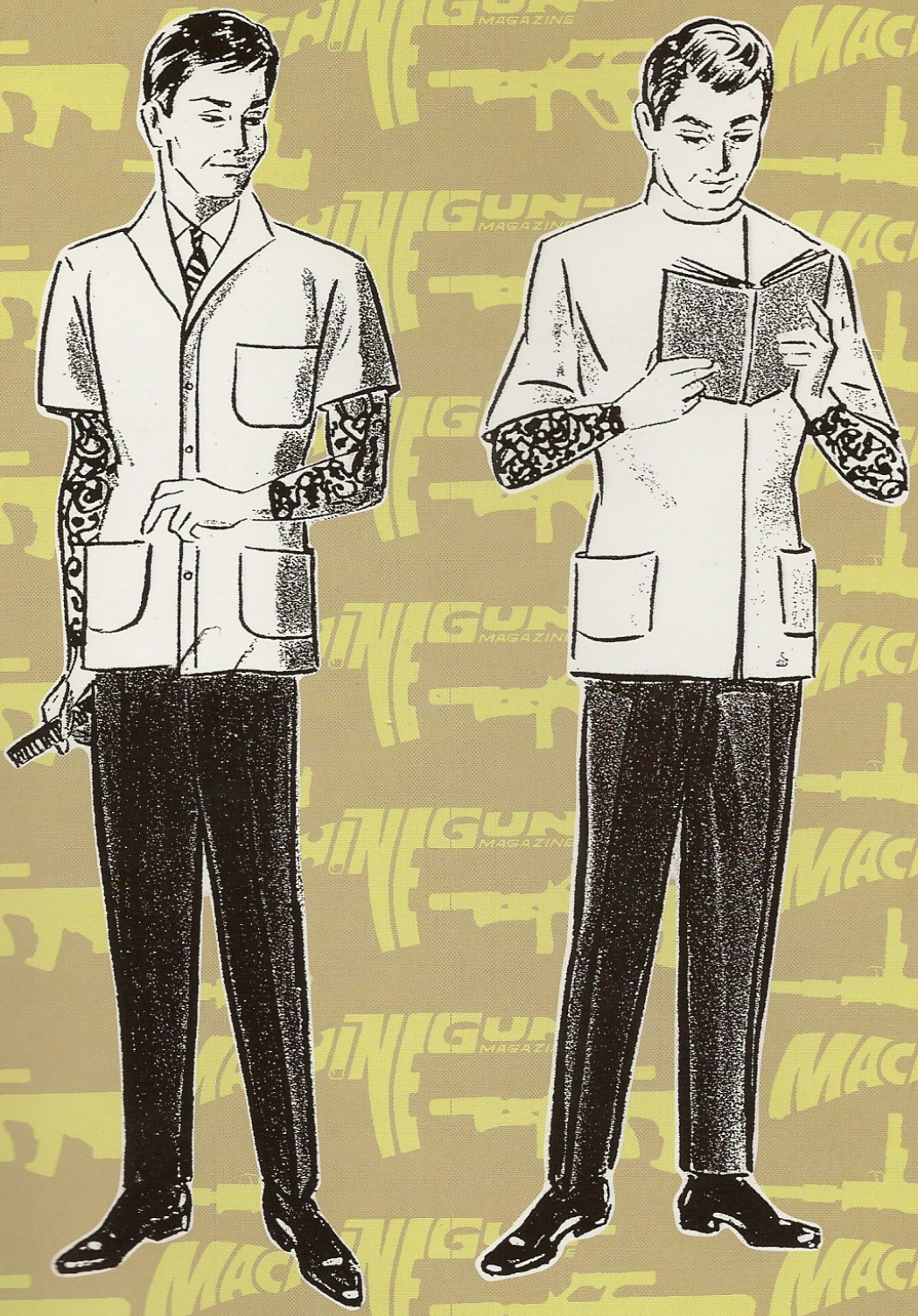
MACHINEGUN

ISSUE NUMBER 2 • FEBRUARY 2002 • 5$

A WELL GROOMED MALE TATTOO ARTIST

Proper grooming is also important to men operators. Give careful attention to cleanliness of uniform, skin, hair, hands and teeth and to the daily shower or bath. Keep breath sweet with mouth wash. Keep body free of body odor by having a daily shower and by using an underarm deodorant.



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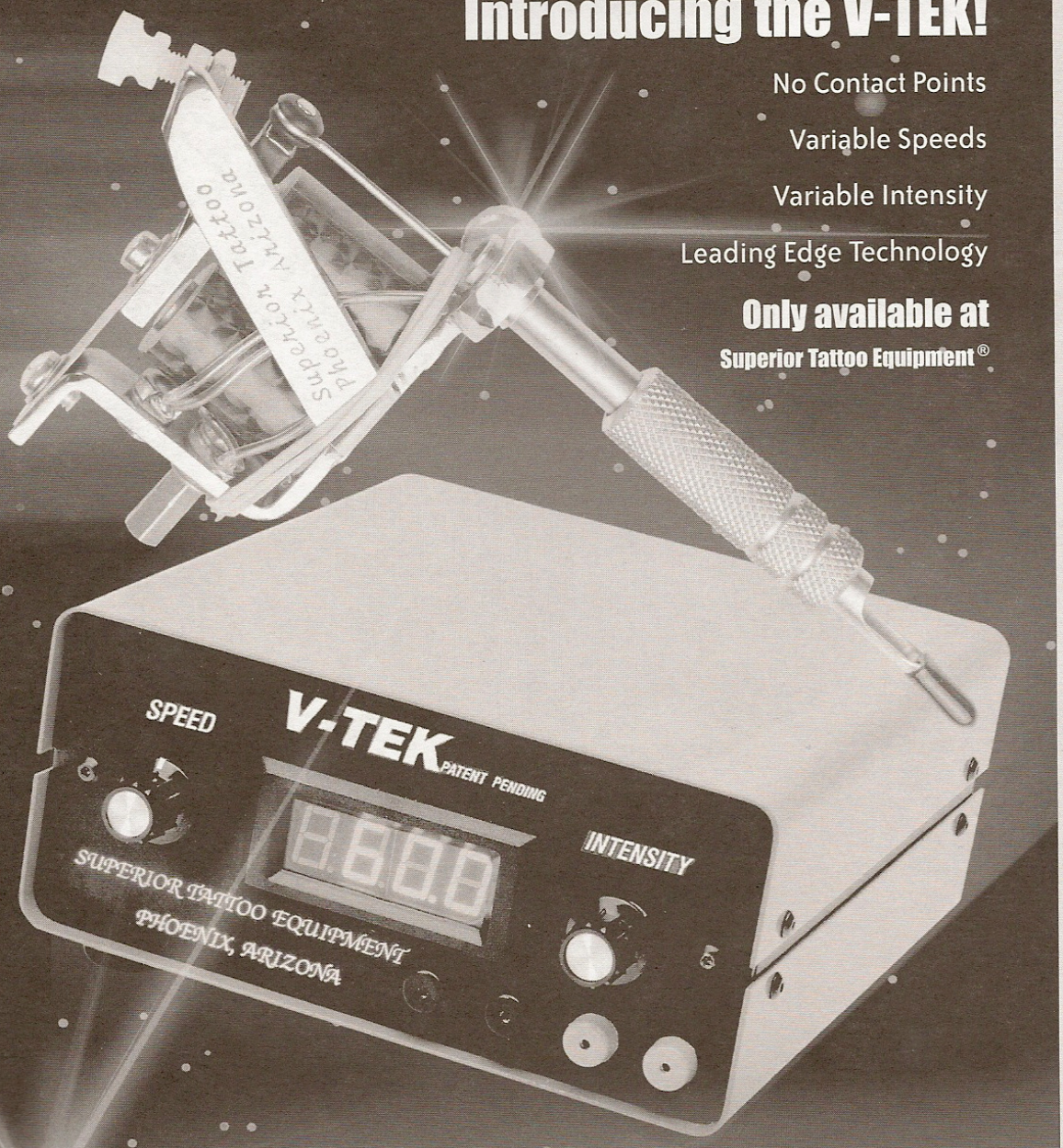

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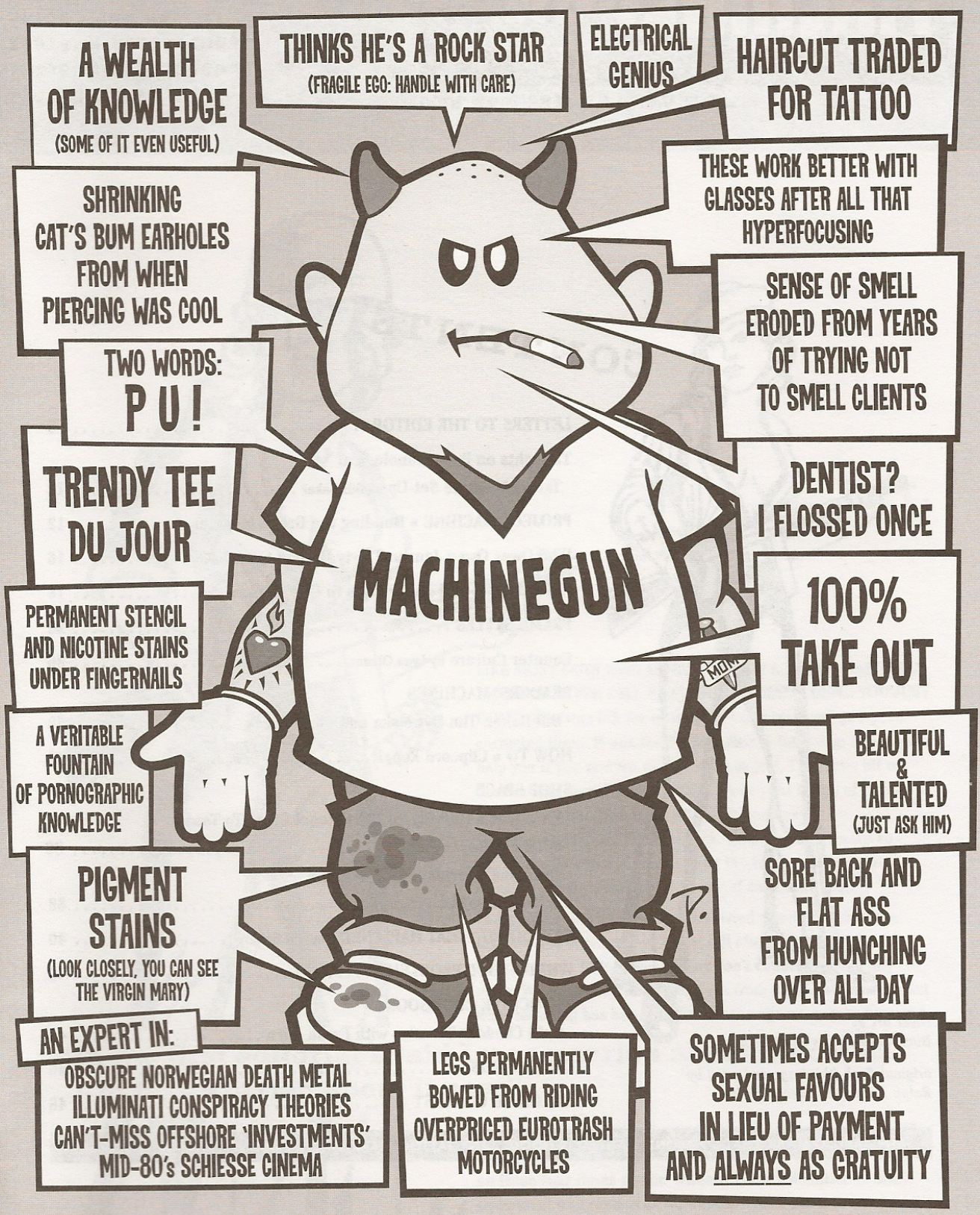
A WEALTH OF KNOWLEDGE
(SOME OF IT EVEN USEFUL)
THINKS HE'S A ROCK STAR
(FRAGILE EGO: HANDLE WITH CARE)
ELECTRICAL GENIUS
HAIRCUT TRADED FOR TATTOO
THESE WORK BETTER WITH GLASSES AFTER ALL THAT HYPERFOCUSING
SHRINKING CAT'S BUM EARHOLES FROM WHEN PIERCING WAS COOL
SENSE OF SMELL ERODED FROM YEARS OF TRYING NOT TO SMELL CLIENTS
TWO WORDS: P U !
TRENDY TEE DU JOUR
DENTIST? I FLOSSED ONCE
MACHINEGUN
PERMANENT STENCIL AND NICOTINE STAINS UNDER FINGERNAILS
100% TAKE OUT
A VERITABLE FOUNTAIN OF PORNOGRAPHIC KNOWLEDGE
BEAUTIFUL & TALENTED
(JUST ASK HIM)
PIGMENT STAINS
(LOOK CLOSELY, YOU CAN SEE THE VIRGIN MARY)
SORE BACK AND FLAT ASS FROM HUNCHING OVER ALL DAY
AN EXPERT IN:
OBSCURE NORWEGIAN DEATH METAL
ILLUMINATI CONSPIRACY THEORIES
CAN'T-MISS OFFSHORE 'INVESTMENTS'
MID-80's SCHIESSE CINEMA
LEGS PERMANENTLY BOWED FROM RIDING OVERPRICED EUROTRASH MOTORCYCLES
SOMETIMES ACCEPTS SEXUAL FAVOURS IN LIEU OF PAYMENT AND ALWAYS AS GRATUITY

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MACHINEGUN Magazine

ISSUE NUMBER 2 • FEBRUARY 2002

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ANY TATTOO MARK THAT SOMEONE WANTED IS GOOD... ANY TATTOO MARK THAT SOMEONE PAID FOR IS BETTER.

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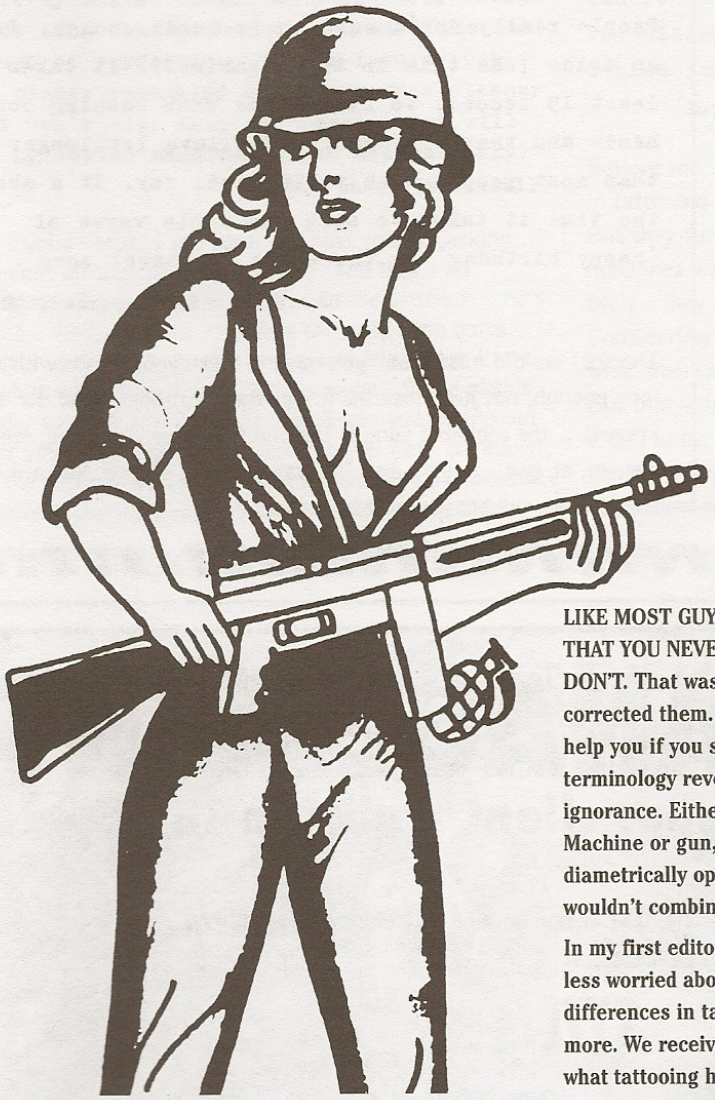


EDITORIAL

LIKE MOST GUYS WHO APPRENTICED IN A SHOP, I WAS TOLD THAT YOU NEVER CALL A TATTOO MACHINE A GUN... YOU JUST DON'T. That was left for customers - or worse, and you never corrected them. It was the dividing line in tattooing, and heaven help you if you strayed over it, even in jest. That little bit of terminology revealed everything, it was your badge of honor - or ignorance. Either you were with it, or you weren't.
Machine or gun, not machine/gun. Those concepts were so diametrically opposed that putting the two words together wouldn't combine them, they'd cancel each other out.

In my first editorial I said I was worried about tattooing. I'm less worried about it now. There will always be factions and differences in tattooing, but they don't count for much any more. We received a lot of response from people who care about what tattooing has become. Six months ago we only had a couple

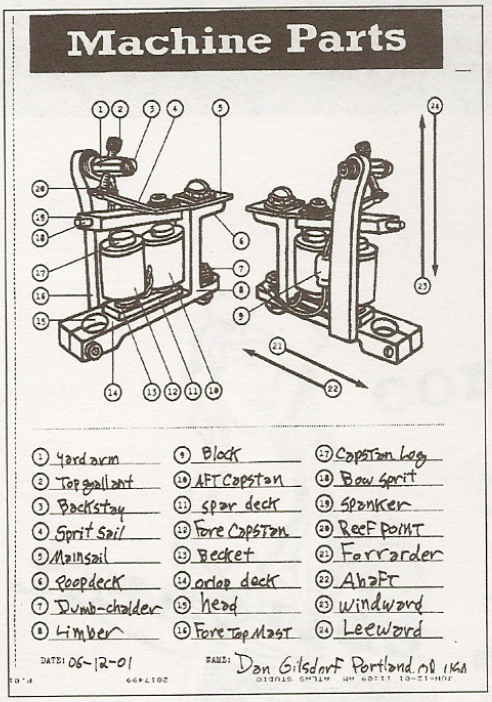
"In my first editorial I said I was worried about tattooing. I'm less worried about it now."

of contributors, this is our second issue and we now have half a dozen contributors. Our original intention was to put out an issue four times a year. Without Eikon's donation of staff, equipment and resources we wouldn't even get this out once a year. We're already busy with full-time careers, so with your support and contributions we will be able to get an issue out three times a year.

Bill Baker

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Machinegun Magazine aims to become a forum for the exchange and discussion of ideas about tattooing and the equipment we tattoo with. This section allows readers to express their views on past articles or issues, future content or the magazine in general. Machinegun Magazine reserves the right to publish, edit, reformat, accept or reject all letters received. Any letter received which is considered offensive or inappropriate in any way may be refused for publication. All letters to the Editor must be accompanied by the authors' full name, city, state, and telephone number. Names will be withheld on request.



THE DEFINITIVE LIST OF MACHINE PART NAMES

Thanks Dan. Finally. (see left)

HAND WASHING

All the stuff about cross-contamination was great. People really don't wash their hands enough. Just an aside (was this in the magazine?). It takes at least 15 seconds to kill germs when washing your hands and that's probably a helluva lot longer than most people wash their hands for. It's about the time it takes to sing one whole verse of 'happy birthday' or the whole 'alphabet song'.

Carnie Marnie, Montreal, Canada

Thanks - we did miss that - you have to wash your hands with soap, long enough, not just rinse them. For those tattooers who don't know it... the alphabet song is the one that goes... ay, bee, see, dee, ee, ef, gee,... aych, aye, jay, kay, elemen, oh pee, kue are ess tee you vee, dubble you ex why and zee.

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TATTOO MACHINE MAGIC

One day I was cleaning one of my tattoo machines with... germicidal surface cleaner. My boss... an old time tattooer of many years saw what I was doing and hollered "Blasphemy!" He explained that I'd be wiping away all the 'magic' that the tattoo machine had built up and that I should leave my soiled tattoo machines well enough alone if I wanted them to run with the same amount of performance in the future. Can you please recommend a good surface cleaner that won't wipe away any 'magic' yet will get my tattoo machines clean and sanitary?

Bubba Jones, (via email)

Hey Bubba - truly I am surprised that you are asking... I thought all the cool kids knew. If (and that's an important if) your boss is a real old time tattooer... he's full of... well, magic... and so is his stuff. You gotta buy one of his most magical machines and smash it and smash it and smash it until it's a powder. Some of this powder you should eat (just a bit). Some you should put under your pillow each night (even if you have company), and the rest makes a nice magical scouring powder, that actually adds magic while it cleans. You're welcome.

EIKON METER

I think that even though your meter is very good, in the mag you made it out that NO ONE EVER had their machines running right. That's like saying that no musicians ever could tune their instruments or play them before electronic tuners were made. I think this is narrow-minded and a disservice to the idea behind your mag.

Barnaby, San Francisco, USA (via email)

Believe me... there have been some machine builders in tattooing whose work was important, and innovative. But they sure couldn't have told you how fast their machines were running, and if they understood duty cycle - they sure weren't telling anybody about it. Considering they had no way of accurately measuring what they were doing, makes them even more amazing. But that was then... and I wouldn't say that people didn't know how to get their machines running right, there just wasn't any understandable language to talk about how machines ran. The meter gave us that.

THOUGHTS ON
Pre-Technological

By: Bill Baker

Tattoo Artists have been using oscillating relays as tattoo machines for nearly a century. During the past few years the machine and its set-up have been questioned, adjusted, measured and discussed more than at any point in its history. Most of the measuring is being done with a meter that was developed and built at Eikon Device in 1997, as a way of measuring the effect spring thickness has on machine function. The spring tests were valid, but more importantly, with the meter we began to develop a way of accurately describing how a tattoo machine is running. The only descriptive terms we had for machines before the meter were slang. We've all heard about machines that really cook, run sweet, and hit like a jackhammer. We all sort of understood what those terms meant, in a general way, and with all of the variables in the tattooing process, close enough was good enough.

Now that we can measure specific machine functions electronically, we can begin to see what changes on a machine are significant, and which ones really are not. The biggest surprise of all has been that we now can figure out what the machine builders of the past were up to. There have always been guys in the trade who were good with machines. All the great machine builders and mechanics of tattooing learned that part of the trade from someone else, or by trial and error, none of them ever said that it was something they were born with. They did measure things on the machine - take duty cycle, for example.

If you've been using a meter, you know that the duty cycle of a tattoo machine is the relationship between the closed contact time, and the open contact time. The meter reads the closed contact time as a percentage, but there is another more physical, pre-technological way to measure duty cycle on a machine.

First of all, I want you to think of this measurement as front spring compression. Look at your machine from the side. Look at the gap between the bottom of the armature bar, and the top of the front coil core. That is called the air gap. Next, pull the armature bar down and check the size of the point gap. Now think about the two gaps you just looked at, size of air gap, size of point gap.

Imagine what would happen if you replaced your front spring with a really thin, really soft front spring... the back spring would force the front spring up, putting compression on it. Now imagine the machine just sitting there with that soft front spring on it. The air gap would be big. Now to check the point gap, you would pull down on the armature bar, while you do that the front spring would unflex, and the point gap would be rather small. There was a lot of compression on the front spring. Now imagine putting a very thick, very hard front spring on that machine. The front spring wouldn't bend at all. The air gap would be small, and the point gap would be larger. There would be less compression on the front spring. Front spring compression is duty cycle.

If there is a lot of pressure on the front spring, the contact points will remain closed as the front spring flexes and unflexes, which will read on a meter as a high duty cycle. If you understand front spring compression, you could look at that machine, check the size of the air gap in relation to the size of the point gap, and know it will have a high duty cycle before you even put it on the meter.

Now the question is whether or not the front spring is too soft, or the back spring is too hard. That can only be answered by knowing the speed of the machine. Three or four decades of machine building would give you the experience to roughly estimate the speed of a machine... if you can't wait the thirty or forty years, or if you need an accurate measurement, you can check the meter. **MGM**

Tattoo Machine Set-up

GREEN MONSTER

In the first issue we discussed the basic frame geometry we planned on using to get the Green Monster up into the 300 Hz range, without sacrificing a usable stroke length. To achieve that, we're using an extended tube vise and armature bar which will give us a working stroke length of 1/16 of an inch, from an air gap and point gap so tiny that even combined they would measure less than a dime thickness. Still, we're pretty sure we're not going to be using any more voltage than most of you are using on your liner right now. Required voltage is what is needed to overcome the size of the air gap, combined with the back spring force. We'll get our speed from the ultra-lightweight armature bar and hard springs, not high voltage or special coils.

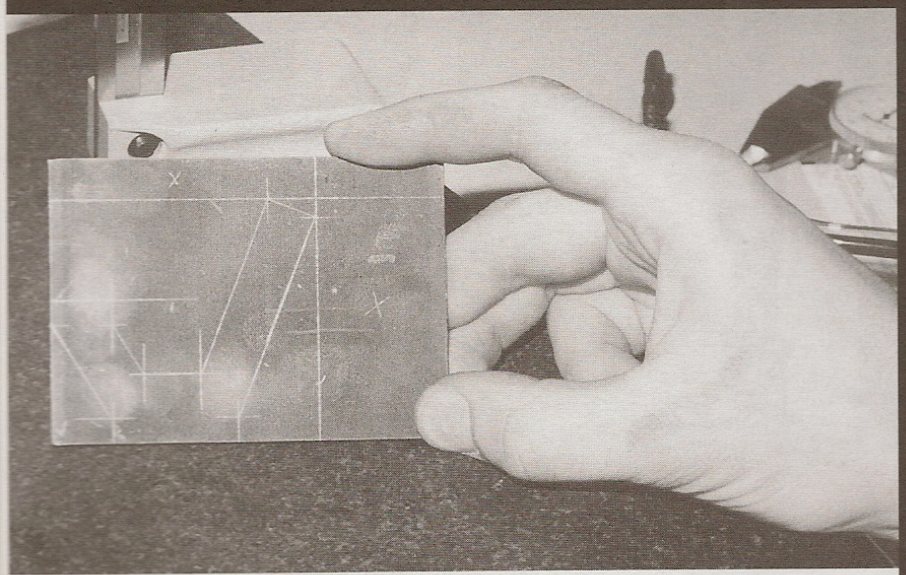
The next thing we had to decide was what method of construction we were going to use. With a one-off machine like this, we're not going to cast the frame. We could mill it out of a solid billet, but that would be a lot of milling, and a lot of wasted time when we need to make small adjustments or changes to frame geometry.

The answer we came up with is the answer tattoo machine builders have been coming up with for at least the past sixty years. This machine will be a pre-fab. Before you start saying a frame held together with pins and screws can't be any good, consider the pre-fab's long history. Charlie Barr, Sailor Jerry, Captain Coleman and Paul Rogers all built pre-fab machines.

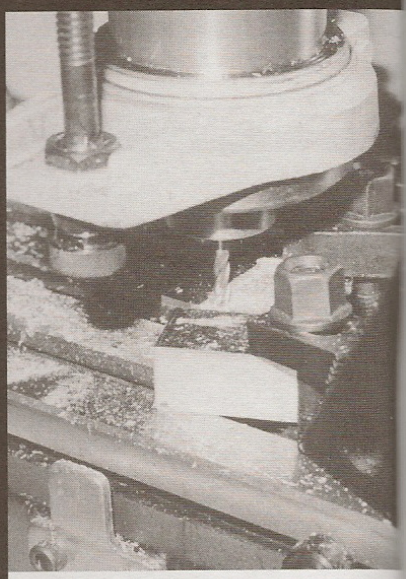
If you are building a lot of identical machines, then casting the frame is the most cost effective means of manufacture. If you are prototyping, or building machines one at a time, then the pre-fab makes the most sense. If a pre-fab is constructed properly it will be every bit as stable as a cast frame or a frame machined from a billet.

By altering the placement of the top binding post and the angle of the front spring on the armature bar, we will determine if machine performance and efficiency can be increased by reducing the follow through on the contact points. Follow through is the term applied to the part of the contact motion which occurs after the contact has been made.

The follow through of the contacts results in the contact point sliding across the contact screw as the front spring deflects, producing a wiping action. It is difficult to keep the two faces of the contact point and screw in alignment. Because of this, if follow through can be reduced, the points will open and close more cleanly without chattering or failing.

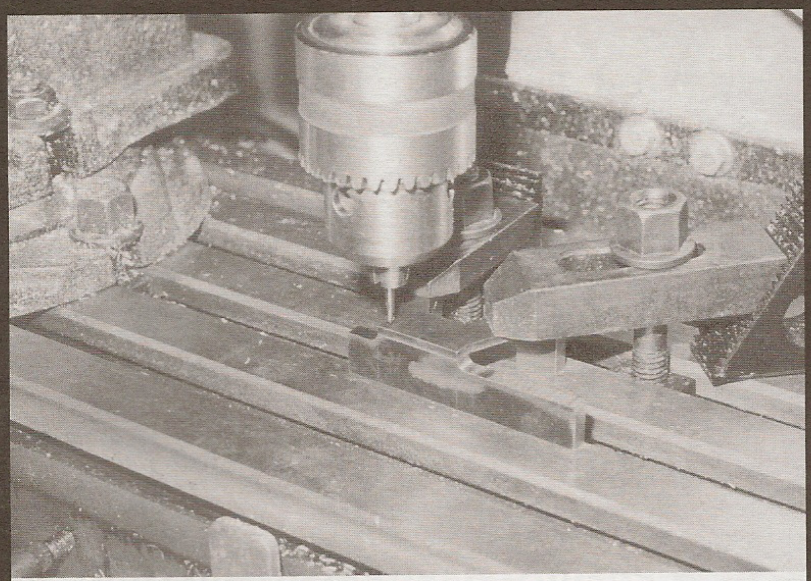


1. LAYING OUT THE SIDE PLATE

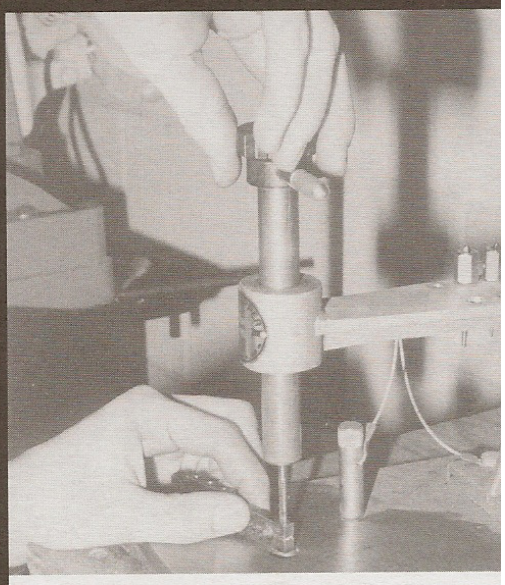


2. MILLING THE SIDE PLATE

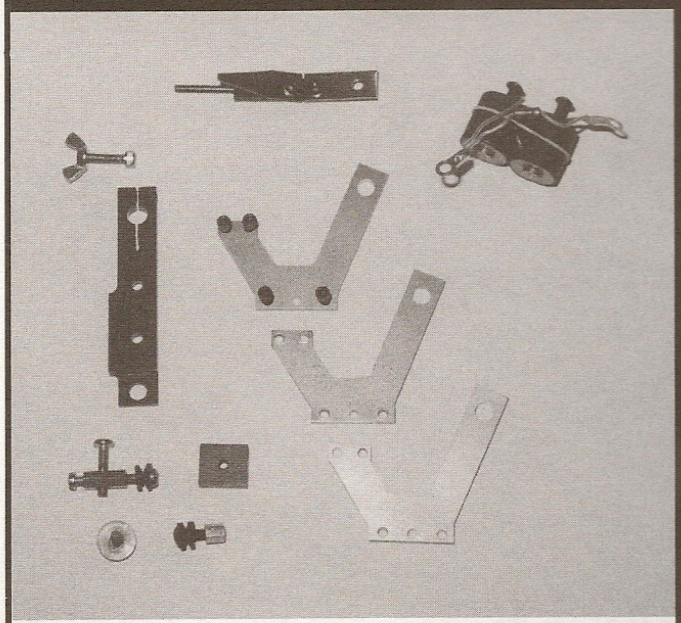
WORLD'S FASTEST RUNNING TATTOO MACHINE!



3. SPOTTING THE HOLES

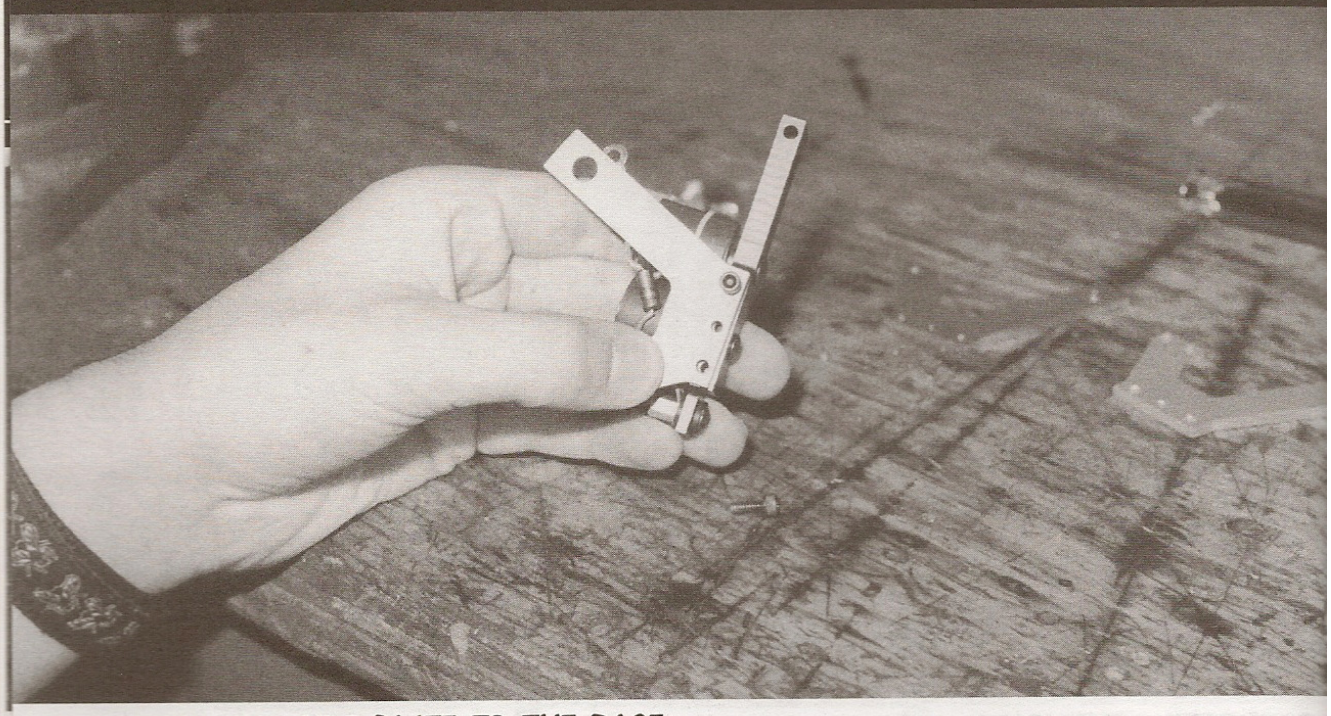


4. TAPPING THE BASE PLATE

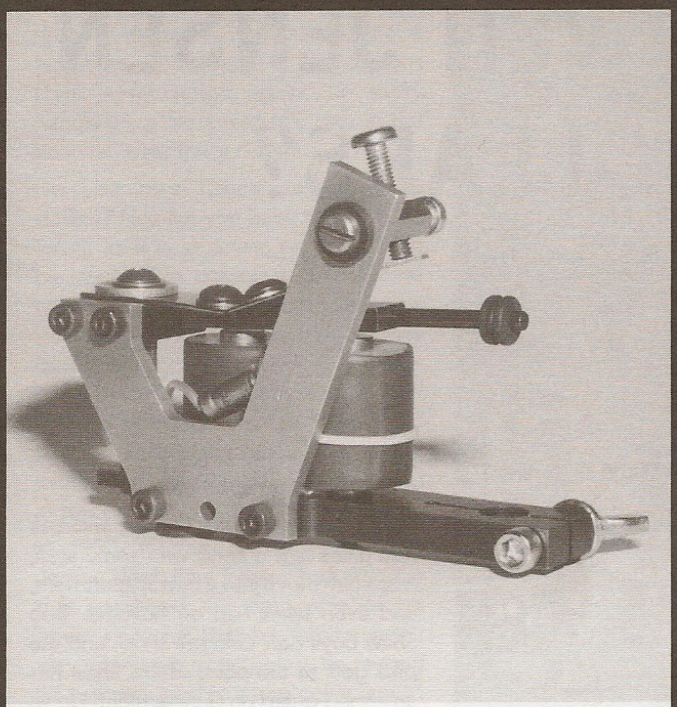


5. FINISHED PARTS BEFORE ASSEMBLY WITH BRASS, ALUMINUM AND STEEL SIDE PLATES

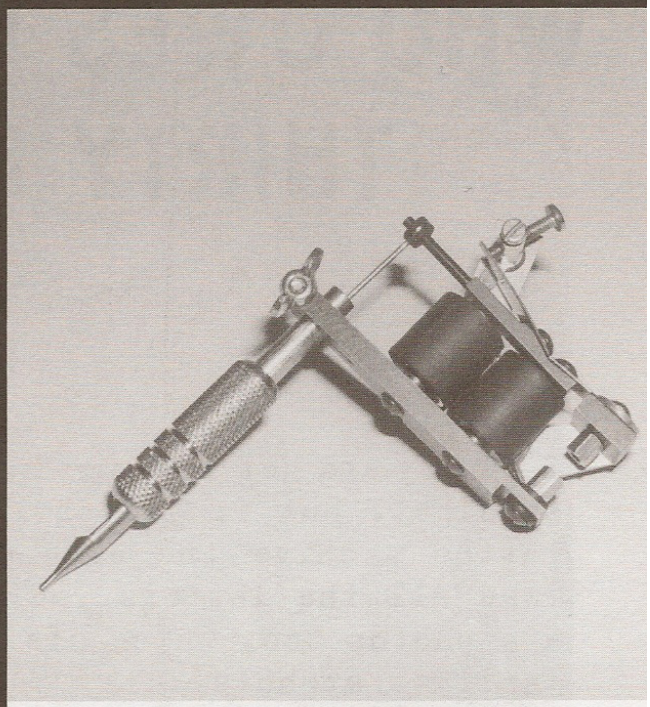
6. MOUNTING THE COILS AND ATTACHING THE BACK BINDING POST



7. BOLTING THE SIDE PLATE TO THE BASE



COMPLETED MACHINE



COMPLETED MACHINE READY TO RUN

In the next issue...

THE GREEN MONSTER WILL BE RUNNING!

- We'll use three different frame materials: steel, brass and aluminum to see how they affect performance and speed.
- We'll try different placement of the top binding post and angle of the front spring to reduce follow through.
- We'll test a couple of different capacitors.

Then we'll combine the best of the high speed tricks into the final Green Monster.

WHO OWES OWEN JENSEN THIRTY DOLLARS?

BY: BILL BAKER

I'll try and get this Owen Jensen story straight, but if you ever get to the Tattoo Archive in Berkeley, you can read all the letters yourself. There are photos too, which are really just family snapshots, like you'd find in anybody's home.

There's a photo of Owen standing in front of a 1968 Firebird, might be a '69. On the back someone has written that the photo was taken a week after the accident. Except for his arms, which were really solidly tattooed - almost black, he looked kind of like any thin old guy. In his letters he writes about day-to-day stuff, no ego. But he had a real successful supply business in the forties and fifties. He had been married to a famous circus fat lady and tattooer named Dainty Dottie. He was a west-coast guy, Los Angeles mostly. Not a bad place to be in the sixties.

The more into the photos you get, the more bits and pieces of this guy's life you can figure out. There are lots of photos of Owen Junior... and you can figure out that Dainty Dottie died when Owen Junior was real young. Once Dottie was gone, Owen lived for Owen Junior.

Imagine tattooing in Southern California in the fifties and sixties, and raising a son on your own. There are pictures of Owen Junior with a super go-kart that he built and raced... it would go like sixty miles an hour. Owen Jensen was proud of his kid; you can see it in the photos, but you can feel it in the letters he wrote. Honor student, in the Militia, had his pilots licence before he was out of high school, and Owen gave him that brand new Firebird. He went to the dealer and picked it out for Owen Junior. You know, for sure, Owen had some money, and Owen Junior was his whole life. But Owen Junior died in a car wreck. Not in the Firebird, in a friends car, and Owen's whole world seemed to get dark. He was in his seventies, the plan had been to be a part of Owen Junior's family.

Owen Jensen slides into an almost mechanical existence, work on the pike, live in a cheap apartment near work, groceries once a week. He sold the cars and the stuff. The pike was rough by this point, the whole world was changing. You got a guy from the twenties, in the groovy seventies. He works for Bert Grimm, until Bert fires him. Lee Roy Minugh gives Owen a job just down the street from Grimm's, probably just to spite Bert.

Owen carries on with his life, and Lee Roy gives him a hand with some stuff, helps him move into a better apartment, and even takes him on holidays. Bob Shaw buys Bert Grimm's shop, and the pike gets to the point where Shaw has an armed guard on duty at night. Down at Lee Roy's, Owen is running the night shift - working alone until one or two in the morning.

In Hollywood, Cliff Raven buys a shop from Tuttle. The guys on the pike figure that's just nuts - nobody's going to get tattoos in Hollywood. The pike's where it's at... always will be.

Owen gets some stuff stolen, he can't watch four or five tough guys while he's tattooing one. He even loses a machine off his work counter. He's in his eighties, weighs 110 pounds, and working alone, but he figures he'll be okay 'cause he's got a Derringer in his right pocket. He gets a cab to pick him up every night, and wait until he's safely inside his apartment.

From the letters around this time, you can tell something isn't right. In a way it looks like Lee Roy's taking advantage of Owen, telling him not to retire, that the shop has to stay open late, and that he needs the money Owen brings in. One night at the shop, Owen gets beat up badly. While holding him around the neck, someone stabs a knife into Owen

Jensen's back. He doesn't get the Derringer out of his right pocket... he gets robbed of thirty bucks.

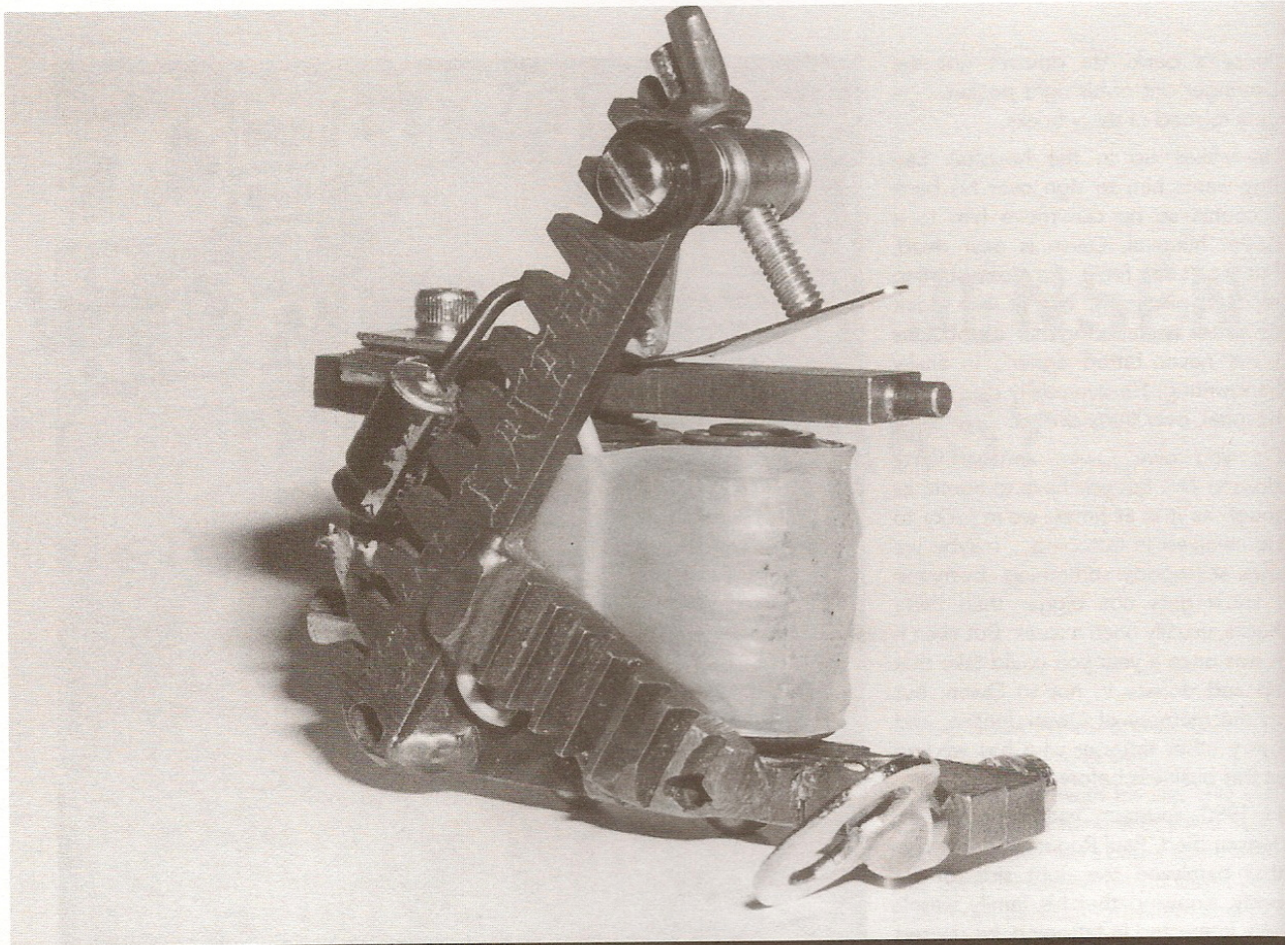
He wakes up in the hospital. Lee Roy wants him to sign over his bank accounts so he can move him to a better hospital, Owen is near dead, but won't fall for it. He does start to recover, physically, but at one point he writes to Paul Rogers, "it's obvious I will never tattoo again", in shaky handwriting. He eventually dies in the hospital, over thirty dollars.

Do you owe Owen Jenson thirty dollars? No. But you have to admit, as tough as it is at times, we're lucky to be involved in tattooing... maybe we owe somebody something. Everyone I know gets tips bigger than thirty bucks, usually once a week. But even if it was once a year you could take that tip and donate it, not to Owen, but to the memory of Owen Jensen, and every other tattooer who has worked at this business before you.

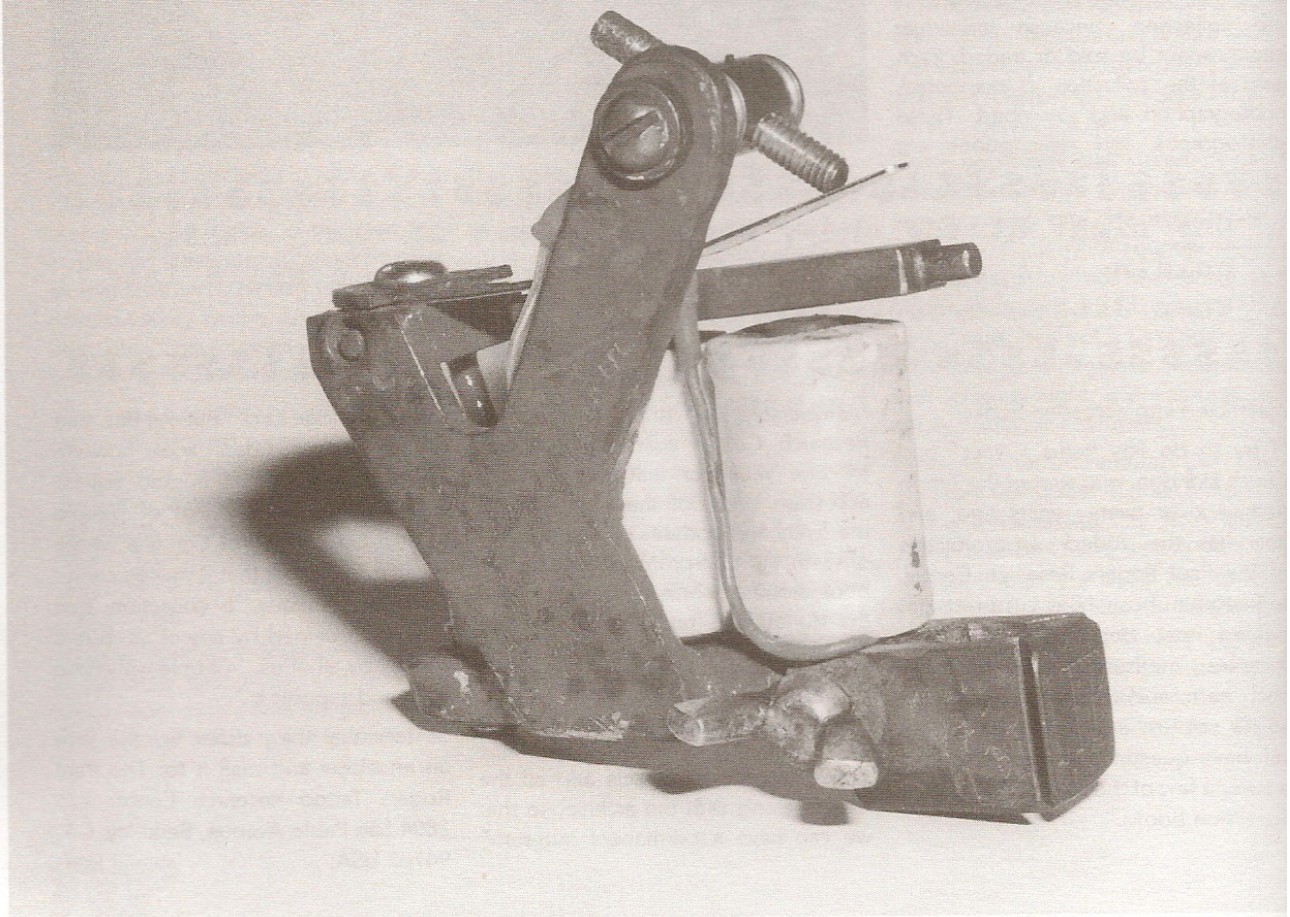
In 1990, fourteen years after Owen Jensen died, Paul Rogers had a stroke that paralyzed the right side of his body. Knowing that his family wasn't very interested in tattooing, he revised his will, leaving his entire collection to the Tattoo Archive in Berkeley.

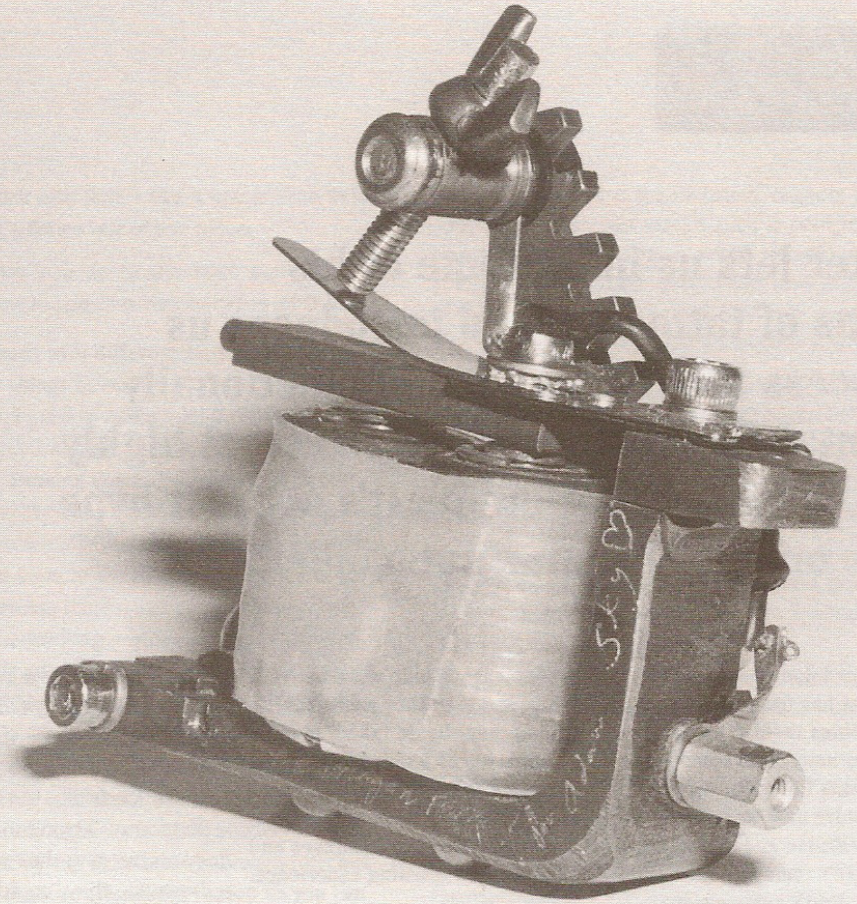
In 1993, a non-profit organization was set up, called the Paul Rogers Research Center. Being a non-profit it safeguards the collection, because individual items cannot be sold or traded. Each item in the collection, is numbered, photographed and described. These photographs and descriptions are assembled into accession books.

$$$

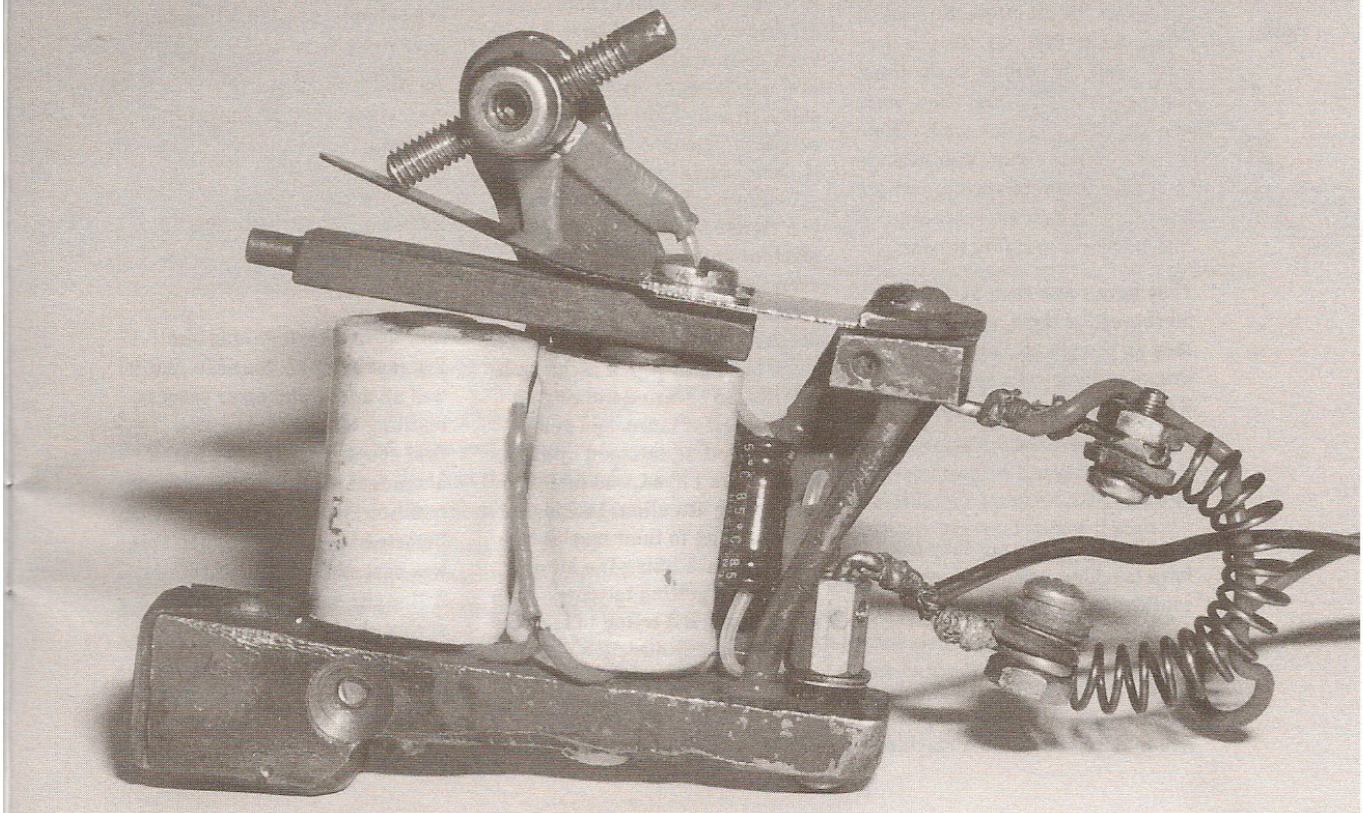


Zen and the Art of Machine Making





an Interview with Clay Decker



MACHINES ON THESE PAGES MADE FOR ADAM SKY

Clay Decker lets us in on some of his perceptions of tattooing, and introduces us to the process that has made his functionally experimental machines some of the most highly valued by collectors worldwide. It's not just hype - he is the original art machine maker.

Clay Decker **I don't consider a person that has frames made and assembles them, a person that makes machines. Someone that only cuts their springs and puts armature bars in frames that have been drilled and everything for them isn't someone who makes machines. That's someone that builds machines - in an assembly sense - they assemble them, you know, they maintain machines. They're not engineers... they're mechanics.**

Bill Baker It's an interesting point of view. In the old days a guy who built machines built them like you build them, they were making every component. There is a difference when you change to mass manufacturing, where the frame is cast and reproduced one hundred and fifty times.

They have them cast, and then machined for them, and then they go though all this time of wrapping their coils by hand... it defeats the whole purpose.

I'm not sure I would want to say that they're good or bad, or right or wrong.

I don't think that what they ask for a machine, with such over-confidence, is really worth it.

You mean money?

Yeah. I think that every tattooer out there that's willing to spend five hundred bucks on a machine that somebody just had created for them, and then they assembled... I think they should take that five hundred bucks and invest it and get some tools. Because for half that money you could get all the tools to get your own calluses and get your own learning experience.

What was the motivation, what made you make the first frame you ever made?

I was convinced that it couldn't be that hard. It was so simple looking, I knew that I could fabricate something like it, I knew I could. At that point in time I was over-confident in my tattooing skills. Shortly after making a couple of machines, I sort of had the realization that my tattooing skills were really, really below par. Here I was, making my own machines and everything, and even the so-called "factory-made" machines weren't doing what I needed them to do, to have tattoos come out right. Which is the main priority. So I started working on my equipment more, and going out and getting tattooed by guys whose work I liked, and really just paying attention. Looking and listening to their machines and really absorbing the hit of it when I was getting tattooed. Then going home and trying to take the machine in any direction I could, to maximize my options with it.

I understand that. With cars and early hot rodding, guys were building these super hot rods because they couldn't afford to go out and buy a brand new hot car off the showroom floor. But that's certainly not the case in tattooing - I don't think guys have been building their own machines because they couldn't afford to go out and buy a brand-new machine.

No. Exactly, the mindset was, I'll be damned if I'm going to pay that much money for something I know is so simple, and I'm still going to have to work on it.

So what's the basic procedure for you, when you set out to make a machine? Do you work things out on paper?

I usually just eyeball everything.

And just fit it all together and make it go?

Now I eyeball everything and I've just got it so dialed in. But it was all a trial and error process learning to make them. The first couple I made were out of aluminum. Of course I found out how horrible they ran, really. And I started by making a frame that was assembled by small screws fitting the side plate, and the spring platform, and everything. Once I realized how readily available the tooling was that I could have at my house, and use myself, I started brazing stuff.

I've really stuck with that. I like it better than welding or machining a frame out of one piece.

Does that free you up to do more stuff? Can you make different shaped frames because of that?

I can experiment with different structural theories, to sort of get things to run a certain way, and refine things. I used to make a lot bulkier, heavier machines. Once I started getting machines that I thought were running comfortably good, they had become real bulky and heavy - I was trying to go for some real structural integrity on them. As I began refining them down to weigh less for friends of mine that don't have big hands, and can't handle a real heavy machine for long periods of time, I realized what exactly it was that I wanted the frame... that's holding everything together... to have, and what I wanted it to do. Then I just sort of made a mental checklist of what I wanted, where I wanted it, why I wanted it there and what I wanted the end result to be. I sort of thought it out and I started creating machines that were a little more roll-cage like, but not going all the way around the motor, so you can still access the magnets.

I know you used a lot of found objects in making your machines. You would pick a component that was a basic frame shape, when people would look at a machine you built they'd say 'wow, it's made out of this, or that'. I don't think anybody ever took that sort of approach to machines before you did.

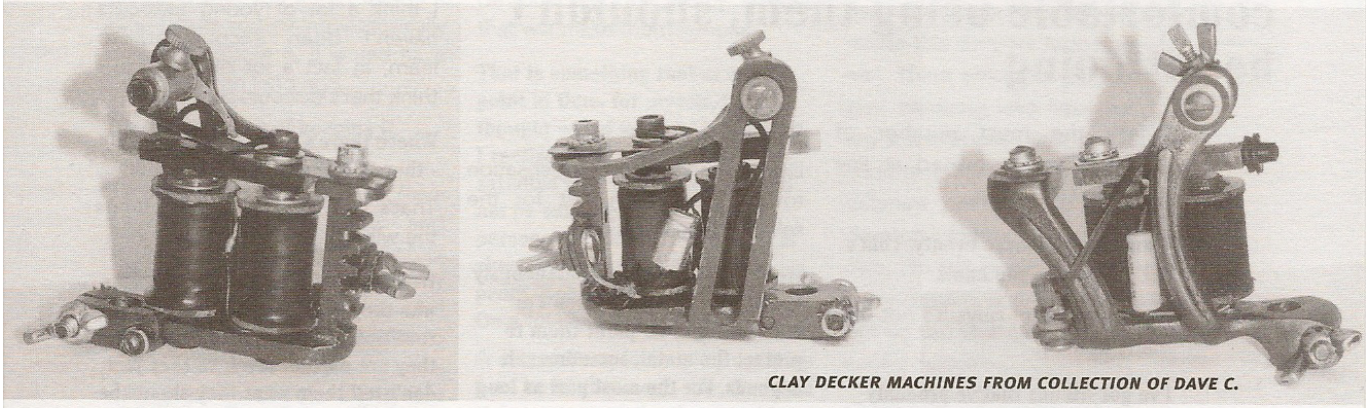
I think I was just going for exotic materials that would add mystery to the moment of the tattoo... like... even the tools are so mysterious.

Are all the machines you've built one off's or is there a kind of style you've done more than once?

I actually made maybe thirty of these re-bar frames. The side-piece was made out of re-bar. I made maybe twenty that were bolts that were cut. I made a broad spectrum of ones that were cut bolts.

Were there any that stood out, that were sort of your favorites, for any reason, they ran really great or they just looked cool?

Definitely. I enjoyed making ones that would look cool, no doubt, but the primary function of any of them was to have them run really good, and it was a bonus if they looked really cool. I think probably my favorite ones are three that I made the same. I just happened to have enough scrap parts of these weird



CLAY DECKER MACHINES FROM COLLECTION OF DAVE C.

By the amount of mass you were building into the early frames, were you trying to get things super rigid?

I was trying to get the frame to not give at all. I didn't realize at first what I wanted, I was just trying to simulate what I already had, that had the holes in the same place, and see if it ran. The more I tattooed in conjunction with making the machines, the more I realized what I wanted out of the machine. Without having been doing tattoos at the same time, and being dissatisfied with the tattoos I was doing, and wanting to get better, I wouldn't have had the inspiration and determination to tamper with my equipment, to refine things down to work better for me.

chunks of metal that I had left over from cutting up some railroad spikes, and from cutting some Acme threaded rod, and from some geared rack, which is just a geared strip. I made three the same, and I called them the Panzer Blitz, because they looked like... just the way everything was laid out it looked kind of like weird North African tank parts, or something. Like military geared bracket things. It was really weird looking. They had a basic structural layout of like a Jonesy, but the chuck part was a lot beefier and it was all a mix of steel and iron. The rear binding post area was laid out like a Sailor Jerry, where the yoke section of the frame extended out past the back vertical part.

Like he did on his Bulldogs.

Yeah, just like a Bulldog.

I hope we can get a photo of one of them. I'm going to try and find photos of them 'cause I think it's important to at least document it.

I feel like a slacker for not having photos, for my own reasons I don't, but I'd like to be able to look at what I've done when I'm old.

I think that's valid, and I think a lot of us kind of do stuff and think ahhh... what's it worth? It's just tattooin', it's just me... but you know, some of it's pretty cool.

I think that history is one of the most priceless things. After all, that's what tattoos are all about. History.

I think that a tattoo artist that cannot maintain his tools and feel comfortable using them, shouldn't be tattooing.

What's the most number of machines you've owned at any one time?

I don't know, maybe twenty. That's not that many, you know.

No. For a lot of guys it's not that many at all.

I've got friends that've probably got more of my old machines, you know, machines that I had owned, than I've ever owned at one time.

What's the fewest number you've ever had?

Hmmmm...

I guess when you started?

Yeah, two.

Generally now, for everyday tattooing, how many machines do you keep around?

I like to have six.

And they all run differently?

Yeah.

Do you have a preference of the basic frame styles? Is there one that you feel is better than the others?

Ultimately, as long as it runs really good, and the frame has enough integrity to keep it running like that - then I really have no preference. I prefer to not be holding something that's really shiny 'cause I find that in my peripheral vision that's distracting for me. When I'm working I like to just really treat the tool like it's an extension of my hand. I find that any kind of fish tape or any chrome is really distracting for me.

Do you make any compensation toward decoration just for the sake of decoration?

Well, whatever feels spontaneously to suit the moment, when I'm assembling. I do paint them to protect the metal, sometimes. It depends. For the most part as long as it's not going to distract me.

Do you think we're still going to be using the same oscillating relay type of machine in ten or twenty years from now?

I feel that I will be. For sure. I really don't think that functionally it could go any other direction, if we're going to keep it a craft, and keep the tool as simplified as possible for the craftsmen who know this tool. To have something, let's say, that was a full enclosure, where you don't even see the operating parts would be so mystifying to the person using it, that they probably would never even learn to maintain it.

Sadly, I see a lot of young guys who don't understand their equipment. And they would never dream of changing it – they kind of go with it.

Yeah, they go with it and their tattooing sucks - they blame it on the machine, and they just sit there and get depressed and hate their job.

It's crazy. And I think there's people running shops in this day and age who are promoting that. They don't want the young tattooers to know anything.

And that's one hundred percent wrong. I think that a tattoo artist that cannot maintain his tools and feel comfortable using them, shouldn't be tattooing.

I think a lot of young tattooers haven't been encouraged to learn, in fact a lot of the time I think that's discouraged.

Where there's a will there's a way - there's just not that much will.

That's true. I think a lot of times the will isn't rewarded, though.

Well, a lot of the time the people who they seek validation and reward from, don't want to feel like they are on that level, so they just don't tell them what they should be telling them. The encouragement has to come for the individual, by the individual. Ultimately, there needs to be a new, heightened level of integrity among the publications in the media. For not only the quality of work that's presented, but because they're validating anybody. So basically, the goal that a lot of guys were shooting for initially - they got so easily that they never really learned everything they should have - and never got to where they should have gotten. They graduated in their first week of school, so to

speak. Handing out the diplomas so easily and hastily.

Tattooing has turned from something that was really marginal, and was a type of loosely-knit community to an actual trade that can be marketed to and profited from - so people are always going to take advantage of that.

They're literally trading the trade in for just some sort of retail service. I hate to go to the heart of the beast every time, but the whole lowering of the perception, to the public, of what it takes to do tattoos, was the sale of equipment in the light that they sell it. It's not the fact that the equipment is available, it's how they present it, and how they make it available that makes it so detrimental to the art form. After all, tattooing is one of the few fascinations that all of mankind shares, whether you ever get one, or not. There's only... I mean you can count them on both hands - the bare, brute fascinations that mankind share - and tattooing is one of them.

There's no way anyone would disagree with you about that. If it didn't have something intrinsically wonderful about it, it would have been gone so long ago.

It's just a matter of keeping it wonderful.

Each tattooer is going to have their own responsibility, and as you said, it's to themselves ultimately, but do you think they have a responsibility to try and only do good tattooing? Or to just do whatever a customer is willing to give you eighty-five bucks for?

I think they have an inherent responsibility to do good tattooing. And that means doing whatever you can. What makes our job so unique is that we have to find that middle ground of giving the person what they want... because that is our job, and that's what motivates me ultimately, but also knowing when to say no, that's not a good idea. You're recognizing the regret.

Or at least you feel so strongly about it that you're not willing to participate, for your own sense of well being.

The communication skills between the tattoo artist and the customer are so faith lacking, and so completely bare minimal that it is really hard for anybody to understand what the other person wants. They usually just either tell them, 'this is what you're going to get', and the person just deals with it, or the customer frustrates the shit out of the tattoo artist, because the tattoo artist can't understand them. A lot of times that just ends up in a bad result.

I've seen guys who are really great tattooers, but they put on something that somebody really didn't want. And it may be a great tattoo in and of itself... taken out of context... but on that customer, it didn't fit.

It's a real sad state of affairs.

I think a lot of tattooing gets done "for the photo" which is going to be published and they believe that will make them famous.

That is something that at one point in time, for myself, I thought would validate me, but I realized that I was just never satisfied with myself, and I could not be validated at all, by that perspective. Tattoo artists should shoot for validation from their peers. But on a personal level. On a totally personal level.

A lot of people are saying they just hate the way the trade is right now, and they're not going to deal with it, they're just going to close in on themselves - and everyone else can screw off - but I'm not sure that's really any solution - if everyone did that... nobody would even be able to see what is good.

Not only that, at one point in time I isolated myself, through insecurity and perceptions of others. My tattooing suffered even more, and I was even more bummed out about myself for what I was doing, and I wasn't able to come out of it because I didn't have the maintaining camaraderie and momentum of my peers.

Do you feel that the equipment, and how it's running, and how the needles are made has a lot to do with how a tattoo turns out?

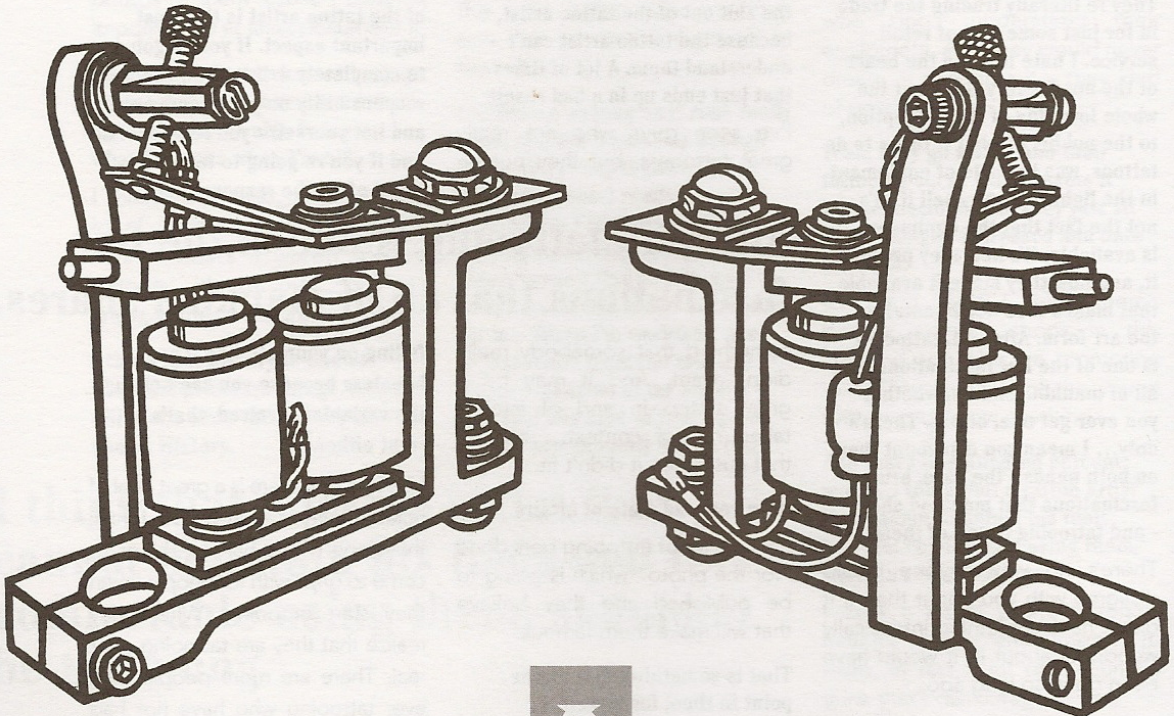
Ultimately, all the elements involved have a lot to do with it. But I think overall the psyche of the tattoo artist is the most important aspect. If you're going to completely write off all the responsibility on your equipment, and not yourself - you're in denial. And if you're going to take the brunt of all the responsibility falling on yourself, like it's hopeless because you can't change the variables involved, that's not right either.

After all, tattooing is one of the few fascinations that all of mankind shares.

Like it or not, there is a great deal of responsibility in what we do. I think that's one of the hardest things to come to grips with for people when they start tattooing. When they realize that they are tattooing – for real. There are more people than ever tattooing who have not had any sort of apprenticeship. It's really important that they are exposed to different opinions, so they can develop informed opinions of their own. I'm not going to agree with every opinion, and neither are you, but we can take it all in, and sort it out for ourselves.

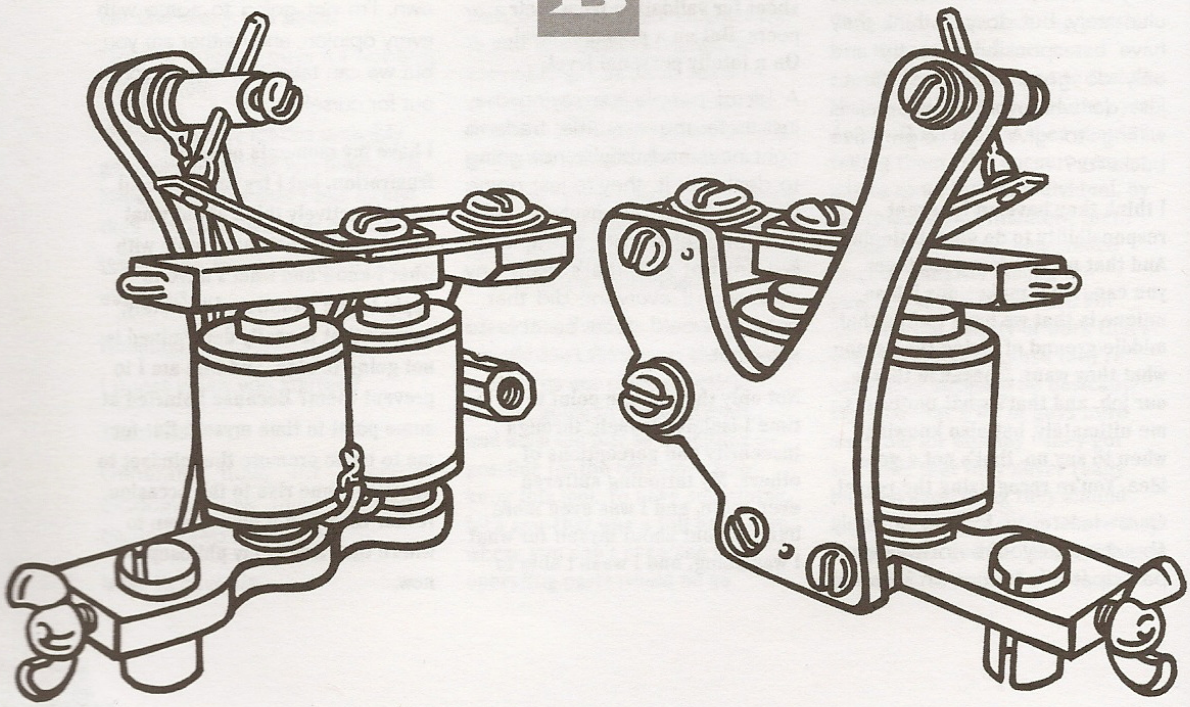
I have my moments of peak frustration, but I try to calm, cool and collectively think about what would be the best thing to do with what I know and what I have to apply to the situation. Ultimately, anyone that is really determined is not going to stop, and who am I to prevent them? Because I started at some point in time myself. But for me to try to promote the mindset to have everyone rise to the occasion, rather than pull it down lower, to where they are, is my philosophy now. **MGM**

FRAME

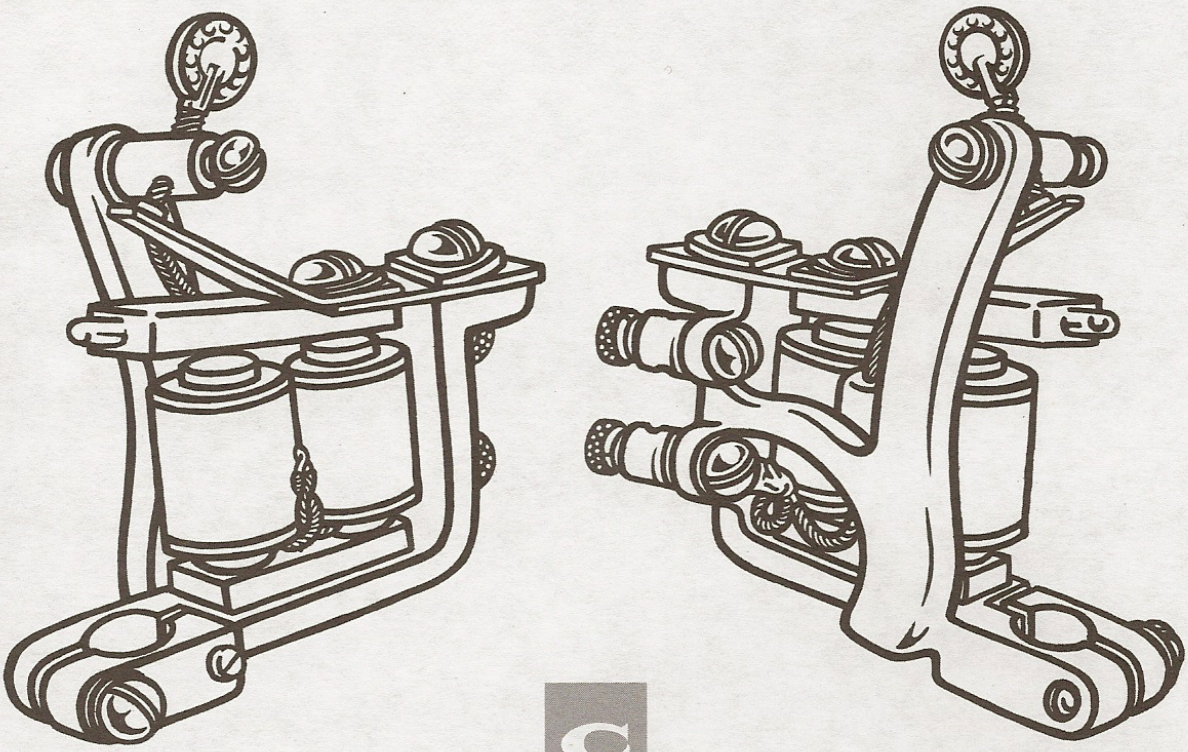


A

B



STYLES



C

A =STANDARD UPRIGHT

B =SIDE PLATE

C =SIDE BAR

Methods of Frame Construction

■ CAST ■ MACHINED FROM BILLET ■ PRE-FAB

Frame Variables

- CONFIGURATION OF REAR BINDING POST
- ADJUSTABLE OR FIXED TOP BINDING POST
- TYPE OF TUBE VISE ■ MATERIAL USED

COUNTER CULTURE

BY: LYNN OLEUM

So, it's a quiet Tuesday afternoon at the tatty shop. I've mopped the floor, organized the counter, washed the windows, dusted the rads and finally sat down at my desk to make a phone call.

Before I can even breathe a "hello" an irate tattooer appears from nowhere, foaming at the mouth and complains that all I do is make personal calls. I stop myself before I tell him where he can stick his tattoo gun, smile and apologize, after all I know he's having a bad day. Face it - it's not easy working with tattooers, they can be rather rash and downright rude at times. But it's not really their fault that you get the blunt end of the stick, a lot of tattooers just don't know what it's like at the front of the shop all day, or maybe they just forget. They keep themselves busy doodling on clients while you're stuck re-arranging the flash for the 100th time. So why do they get miserable at work, when they make 1000 times more than the counter people? Maybe it's because they are part of an all consuming mind-control moon cult.

Here is a list that was slipped to me acquired from the Demon Busters website (Demonbusters.com) of symptoms and behaviors which are typical of members involved in cults.

- ❑ *diminished intellectual ability, vocabulary and sense of humor*
- ❑ *reduced use of irony, abstractions and metaphors*
- ❑ *frequent references to the end of the world*
- ❑ *reduced capacity to form flexible and intimate relationships*
- ❑ *poor judgment*
- ❑ *physical deterioration*
- ❑ *malnutrition*
- ❑ *panic, dissociation, guilt, identity diffusion and paranoia*
- ❑ *psychotic or neurotic tendencies*

Sound like anyone you know? All right so maybe these symptoms come close to home but don't really hit the spot, it could also be possible that this tattooist has a serious drug problem.

Below is another helpful checklist put out by the Church of Scientology (www.drugfreelife.net/) that will help you decide if the tattooist you work with is on drugs.

- ❑ *red eyes, non-sensical talk, irritability*
- ❑ *frequent headaches*
- ❑ *lack of concentration*
- ❑ *dramatic changes in behavior*
- ❑ *carries a pager, talks on a cell phone a lot*
- ❑ *reckless behavior*
- ❑ *violent outbursts*
- ❑ *depression, apathy*
- ❑ *verbal abuse*
- ❑ *manipulative/self-centered*
- ❑ *lack of motivation*

You may be thinking, "well both these lists of behaviors kind of suit the person in question, so what is it with drugs

or cult involvement?" Well it could be quite possible that the mind control cult is using drugs to keep this tattooer in their cult. But if you start looking deeper into cults it may even be possible that we counter people are so far involved in the same cult that we can't even distinguish if the tattooer is just some junkie punk or a powerful master of brain control. Keep this in mind if you were thinking "gee the tattooers I work with are as pleasant as pie and I feel honored to work with them".

Just look at these warning signs of cult involvement provided by "The Shield of Faith Ministries" (www.shieldoffaith.org)!

- ❑ *The cult appears to be innovative and exclusive. The leader claims to be breaking with tradition and offering something novel.*
- ❑ *The leader has an answer or explanation for everything in their ideology.*
- ❑ *Positive developments are credited to the group, teachings or leader.*
- ❑ *Strange language or jargon that you initially can't understand but start to use.*
- ❑ *The group is led by a group of enlightened masters who wear strange clothes and speak in esoteric tongues.*
- ❑ *isolation from everyone or everything outside the group and it's control.*
- ❑ *The group claims to have received special instructions from one or more messengers from the sky.*
- ❑ *Everyone outside the group is evil, of the devil or worldly.*
- ❑ *The group is led by a charismatic, determined and domineering leader who is regarded as the extreme authority.*
- ❑ *The cult's leader claims to have a special mission in life. For example, leaders of flying saucer cults claim that beings from outer space have commissioned them to lead people away from earth…*

Are you being targeted by a cult? "The Shield of Faith" warns that "no single one of these signs means a group is a cult, but more should signal you to watchfulness or at least checking out your concern."

Our current mission at Counter Culture is to find out what you think. Please contact us and let us know if we're way off target here. Or let us know what behaviors the tattooers you work with have that would make you agree with us?

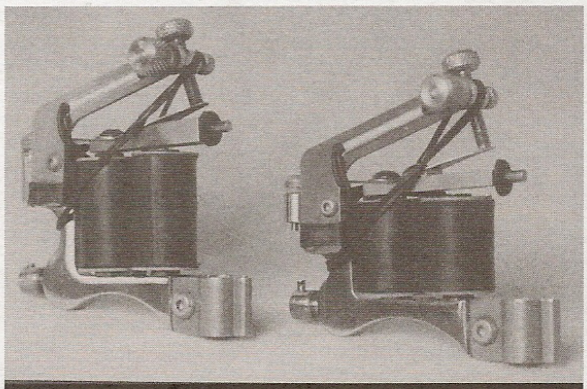
What solutions would you offer to stop this crazy mind control cult before it gets out of hand and turns us into tattooed zombie slaves? MGM

READERS' MACHINES

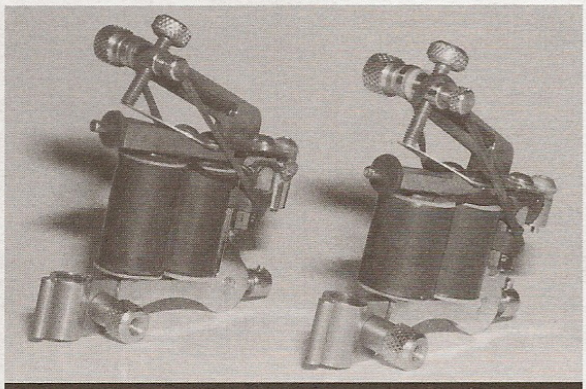
name: **BILL BAKER**

place: **TORONTO, CANADA**

WHEN I BOUGHT THIS PAIR OF MACHINES IN 1996 I WAS LOOKING FOR SOMETHING THAT I WOULDN'T SEE OTHER TATTOOERS USING. THEY'RE MADE BY HOT FLASH TOOLS IN SWITZERLAND. The frames are actually gold plated stainless steel - that's the way they came. The rear spring shelf is only 7/32 of an inch wide - that's less than a quarter of an inch - and believe me, that makes for some weirdness when you're trying to set them up. The tube vise is great, though, and I've never seen another tattooer using Hot Flash machines. If you're looking for something rare and expensive, these might be for sale.



Hot Flash Farben Machinen, Linen Machinen



Hot Flash Farben Machinen, Linen Machinen

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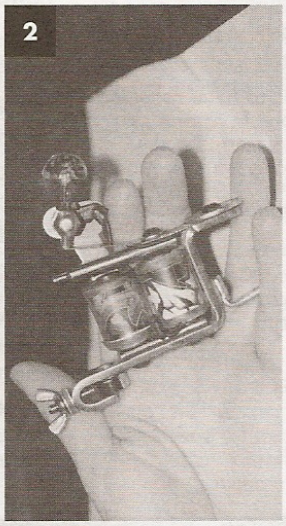
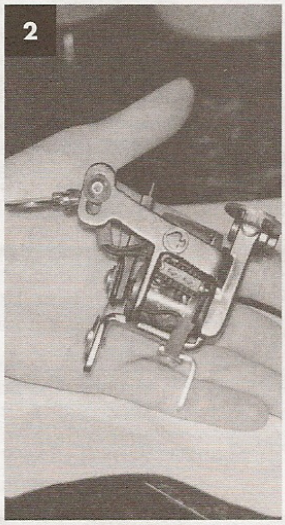
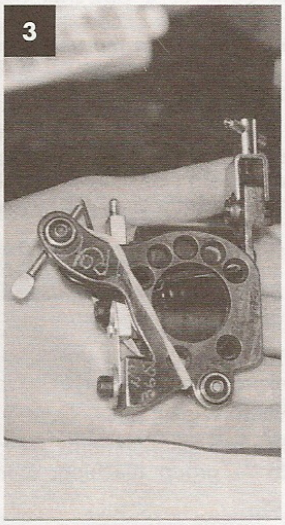
name: **TIM DYWELSKA**

place: **MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA**

1. **Micky Sharpz Line-o-graph.** Stock standard. Cutback liner, O rings and all! Bent the rear of the frame slightly to get the contact point to touch the center of the spring.
2. **Steel Demon Specials.** Stock Brass "Ace" from Rolf, here in Australia. He used to make machines for an old school tattooer named Tony Cohen, but I got him to put graffiti on both machine coils and coin change from around the world. Have not touched them - both happen to be set up the way I like.
3. **Micky Sharpz Iron Telephone Dial.** Love it. Put a little tension on the back spring when I first got it and that's it. Wouldn't trade anything for it.



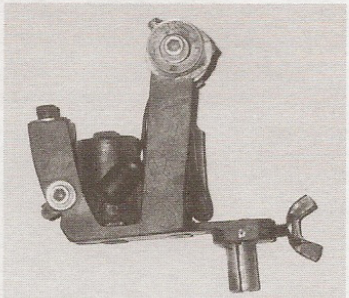




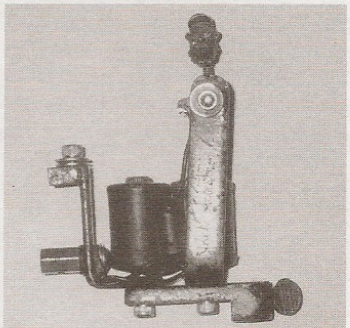
name: CHRIS BROCK

place: FLORIDA, USA

I'VE GOT A HANDFUL OF EM... SOME I'VE BOUGHT AND SOME I'VE TRADED AND SOME WERE PRESENTS, AND SOME I'M JUST HOLDING FOR A BRO OF MINE FOR AWHILE. My prized machines are my original Paul Rogers #23. I believe it's one of the ones he had cast. The only thing original is the frame and even the frame has been (sadly) parkerized, but you can still see where he wrote his name, the number, and "Jax bch. Fla" on the underside. It was given to me as a gift. Another cool machine is my signed and numbered Jack Armstrong #44. I bought it from him in Jacksonville, NC when I worked not far from where he was working at. If you look close at the contact screw, it's a model of Jack's head. I bought it from him at the New Orleans convention and I thought it was pretty neat, so I put it on his frame. The other original design I've got (I don't use it much - just a little heavy for me) is a machine made from a horseshoe, yep a real one. If you're into a little heavier of a machine it's a strokin' one... I got it from this guy, John Buclin from Switzerland. Most of my machines end up in a box with the rest of them in my collection, some get stripped, others don't. The machines I use at work are two Micky Sharpz Red Devils, one with a Tru-Spring liner and the other awaiting a Tru-Spring shader transplant from my National Swing-Gate. I try not to let my collection shrink. Usually I don't sell my machines, I just buy and trade. I'm not big on adjustable stuff. I used to hang around a bunch of old timers, and I was kind of taught by them that more adjustment means more to worry about - but I know whatever works... works.

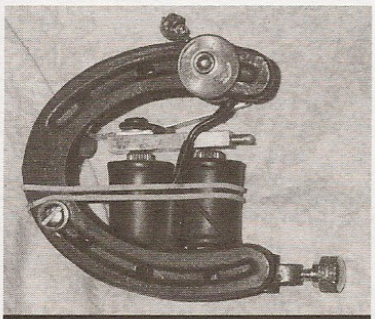


Paul Rogers #23

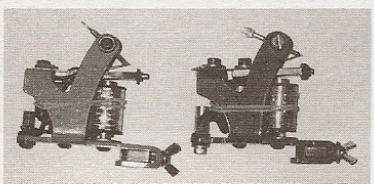


Jack Armstrong #44

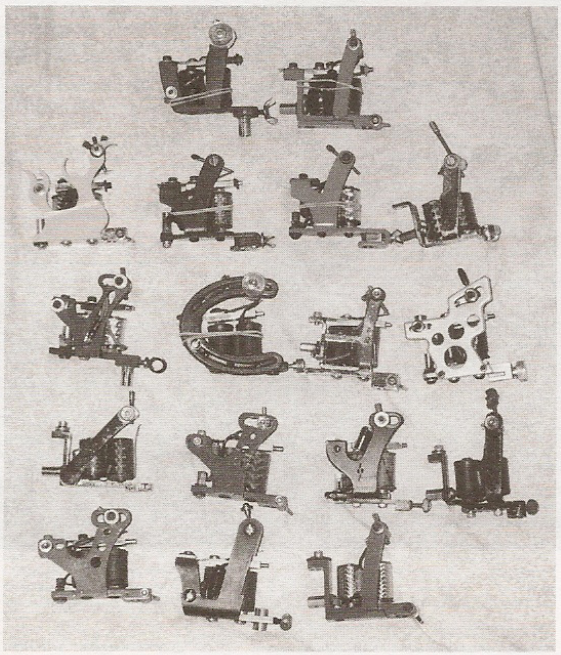
I try not to let my collection shrink. Usually I don't sell my machines, I just buy and trade.



Horseshoe by John Buclin from Switzerland



A pair of Micky Sharpz'



top row (left to right)
Paul Rogers #23
National Swing-Gate

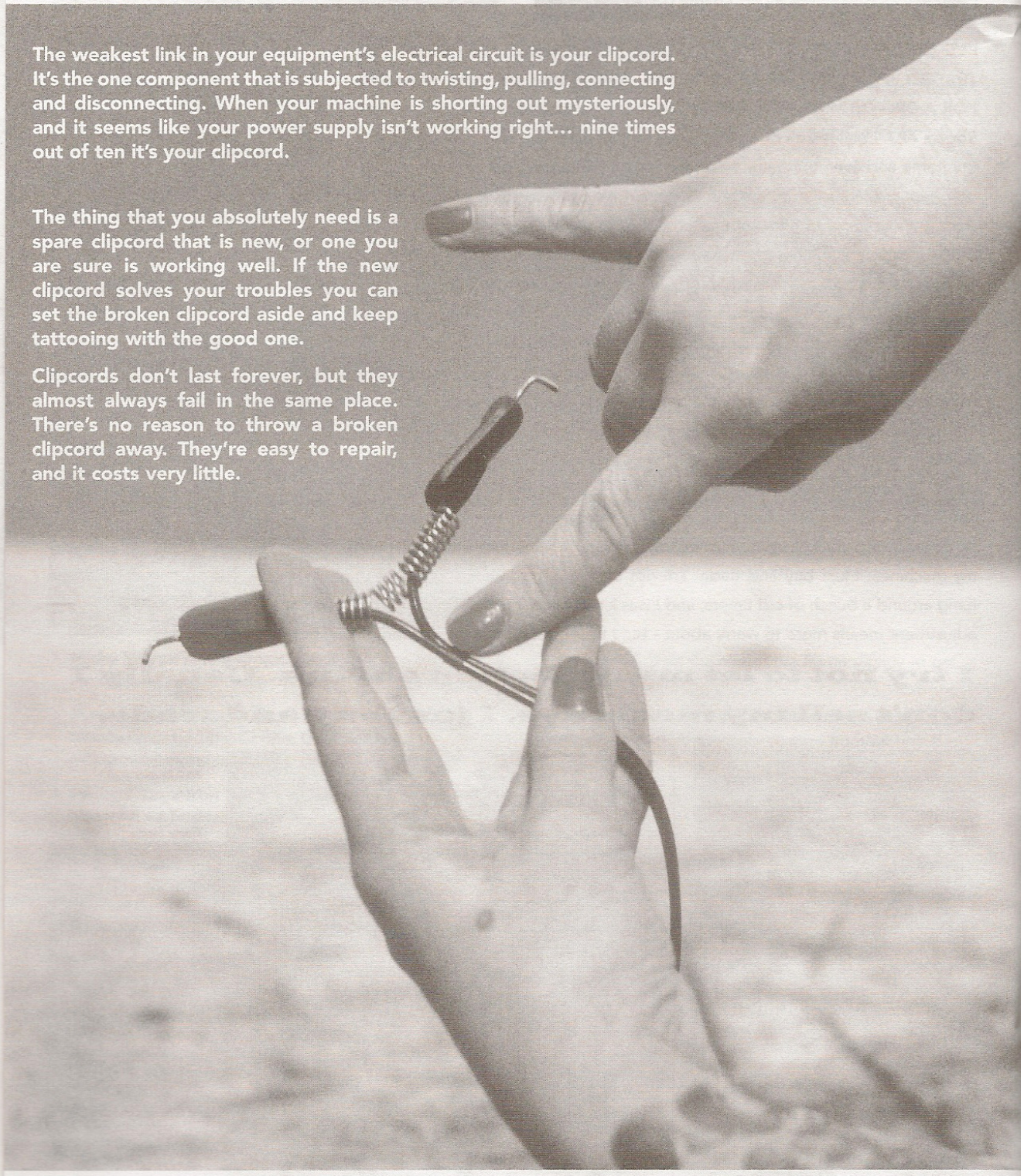
second row (left to right)
Flame frame
Micky Sharpz Blue Screamer
Micky Sharpz Red Devil
Superior frame

third row (left to right)
Coleman copy
Horseshoe by John Buclin
Star machine
Time Machine #307

fourth row (left to right)
National
Dermagraphics Bear #312
Old Rogers copy
Jack Armstrong #44

fifth row (left to right)
Dermagraphics Bear #820
Dermagraphics Old Timer
National Swing-Gate

CLIPCORD



The weakest link in your equipment's electrical circuit is your clipcord. It's the one component that is subjected to twisting, pulling, connecting and disconnecting. When your machine is shorting out mysteriously, and it seems like your power supply isn't working right... nine times out of ten it's your clipcord.

The thing that you absolutely need is a spare clipcord that is new, or one you are sure is working well. If the new clipcord solves your troubles you can set the broken clipcord aside and keep tattooing with the good one.

Clipcords don't last forever, but they almost always fail in the same place. There's no reason to throw a broken clipcord away. They're easy to repair, and it costs very little.

REPAIR

IDENTIFYING CLIPCORD PROBLEMS

IF YOUR MACHINE

- ❑ sputters
- ❑ shorts out
- ❑ changes speed or sound when you tilt or move it
- ❑ changes speed or sound when you touch or move the clipcord

THEN IT IS LIKELY THAT YOUR CLIPCORD NEEDS TO BE REPAIRED.

The point at which the clipcord wire splits, and then runs through the spring of the clipcord end is the part of the clipcord subjected to the most bending and twisting. The wire will break eventually at this point, but the insulation will not break. Even though the insulation on the wire looks fine, the wire inside the insulation may be broken.

Replace your clipcord with a new one or one that you know is working well. If that solves your problem, then your old clipcord needs to be repaired.

TOOLS & MATERIALS NEEDED TO REPAIR A CLIPCORD

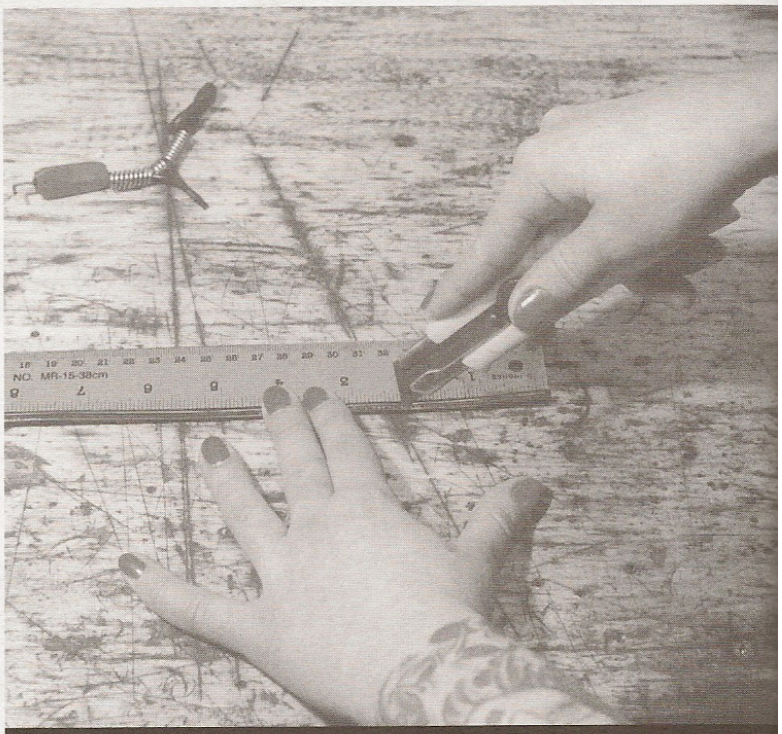
- spare clipcord to verify that the problem is your old clipcord
- vise for holding parts while you solder and desolder connections
- wire strippers for stripping insulation off of wire
- ruler and knife for splitting wire to proper length and cutting heatshrink
- pliers for holding components while soldering and desoldering
- heat gun for installing heatshrink insulation
- soldering iron/station for soldering and desoldering connections
- rosin core solder for soldering electrical connections
- 1/2" heatshrink tubing for insulating the electrical connections on the clipcord
- 3/16" or 1/4" heatshrink tubing for holding the split wire of the clipcord together - 3/16" for silicone insulated clipcord wire - 1/4" for lampcord.

HOW TO

1. Cut off clipcord end 1 1/2" down clipcord wire.
2. Split clipcord wire for 2 1/4".
3. Cut a piece of heatshrink 3/8" long. Use 3/16" heatshrink for silicone insulated clipcord wire. Use 1/4" heatshrink for lamp cord. Install this small piece of heat shrink at the end of the split in the wire, 2 1/4" from the end.
4. Check to make sure the heat shrink holds the split wire.
5. Strip both wire ends at 3/4".
6. Using a knife, carefully remove the old heatshrink from the clipcord end.
7. Desolder the old electrical connections while gently pulling on the wire to free it from the solder lug.
8. Pull the desoldered wire through the spring of the clipcord end. The solder lug will remain on the clipcord end.
9. Tin both new wire ends with a small amount of rosin core solder.
10. Feed both wires through the spring of the clipcord end.
11. Solder one wire to each solder lug.
12. Cut one piece of red 1/2" heat shrink 1 1/8" long. Cut one piece of black 1/2" heat shrink 1 1/8" long.

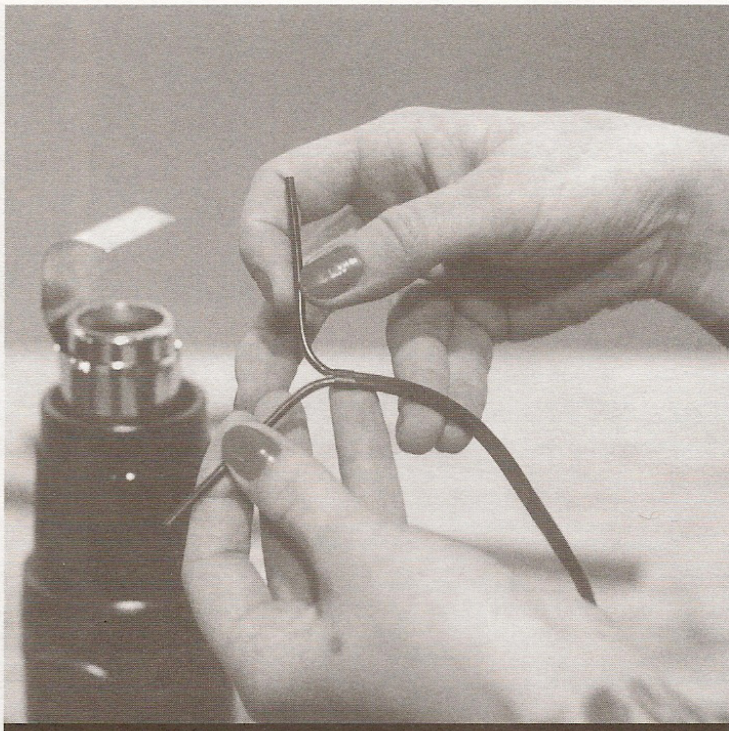
    Note that one wire on your clipcord has writing on it, and one of the wires does not. Install the red heatshrink over the electrical connection that has the wire with the writing on it. The red connector is the positive lead. The black connector will be the negative lead.
13. Using a heat gun, shrink the insulation into place on the clipcord end.
14. Check to make sure the repaired clipcord is working properly by using it to run your machine.

1. CUT OFF CLIPCORD END



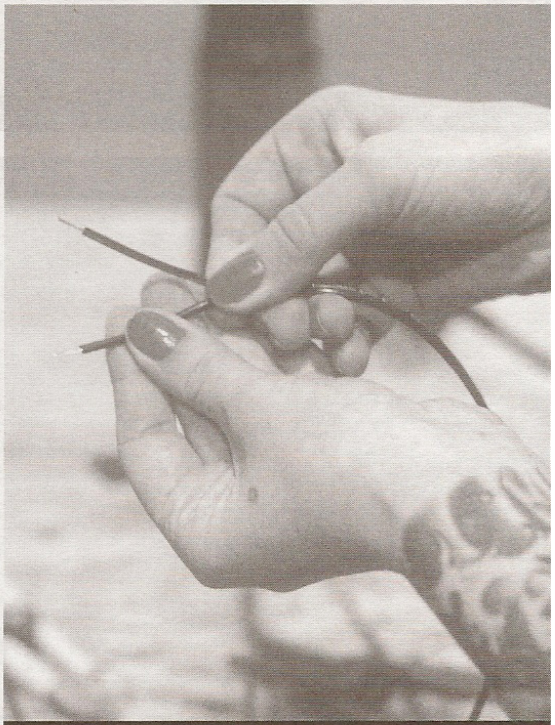
2. SPLIT CLIPCORD WIRE

3. INSTALL HEATSHRINK 2 1/4" FROM END



4. CHECK THAT HEATSHRINK HOLDS WIRE

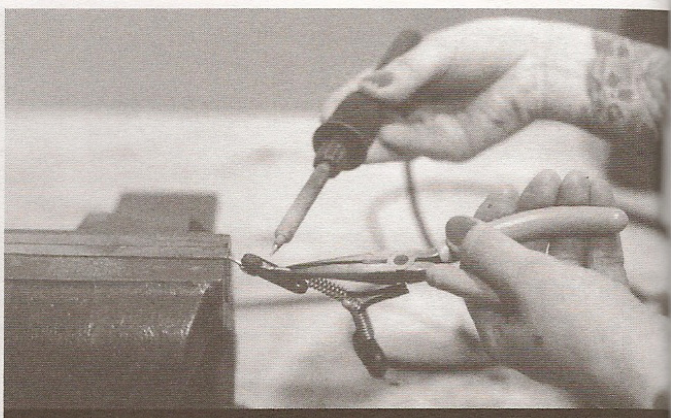
5. STRIP WIRE ENDS



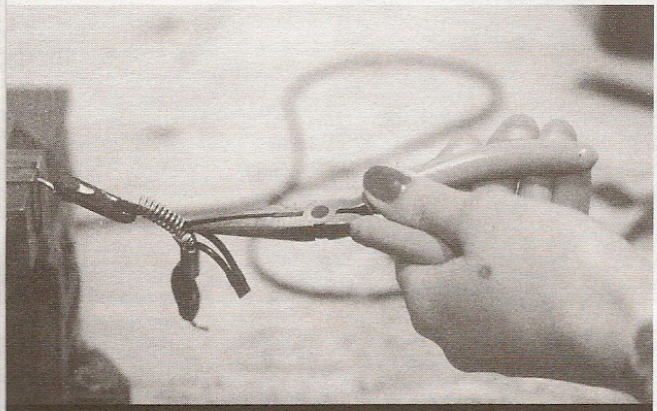
5. STRIPPED WIRE ENDS

HOW TO

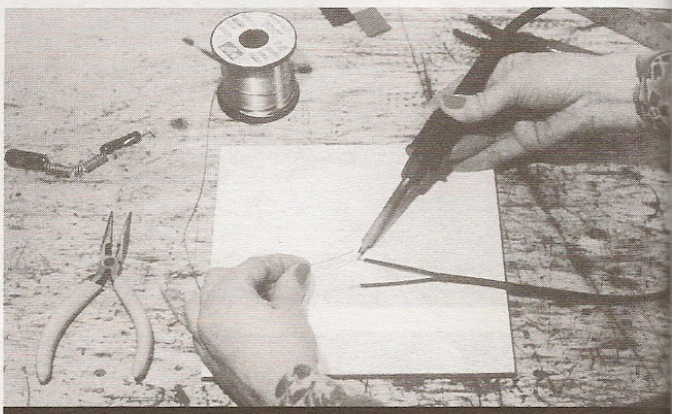
6. REMOVE HEATSHRINK



7. DESOLDER ELECTRICAL CONNECTIONS

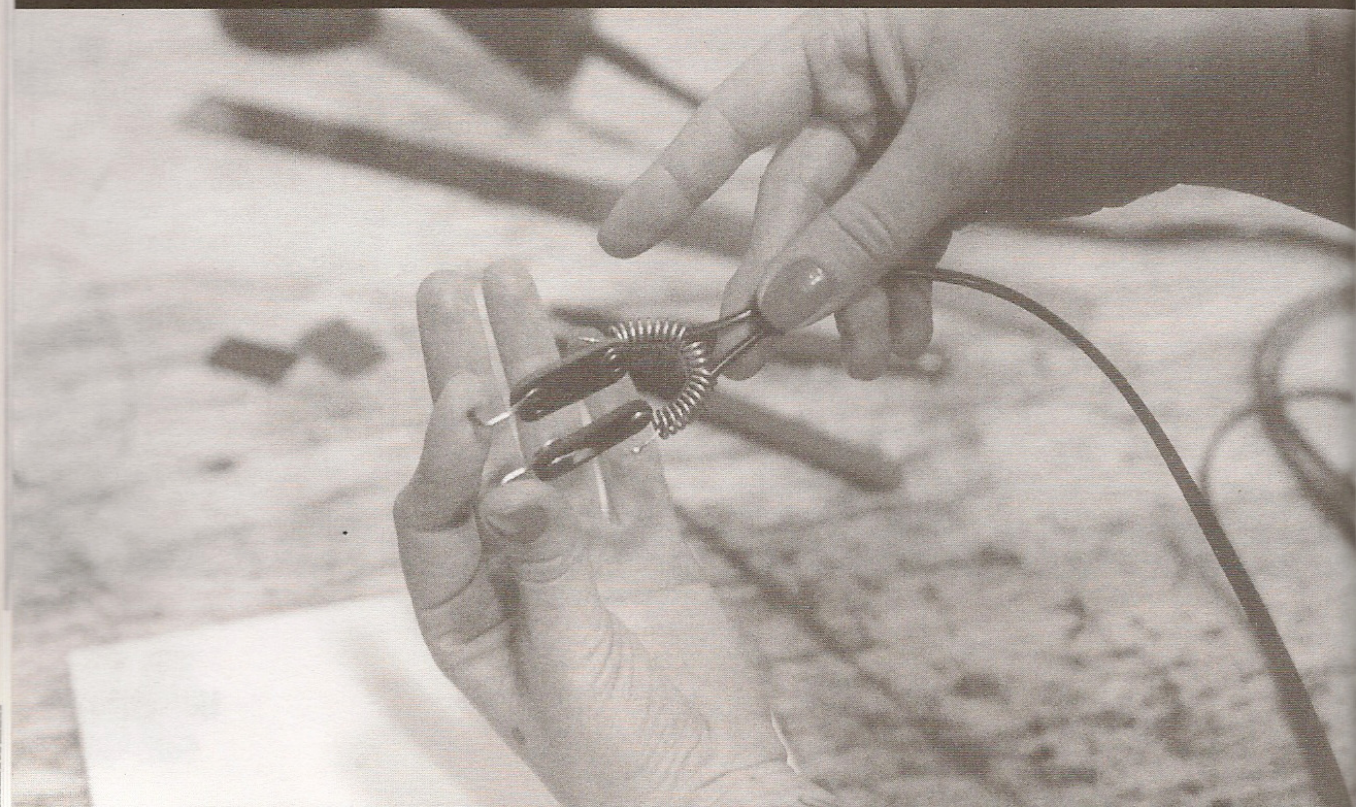


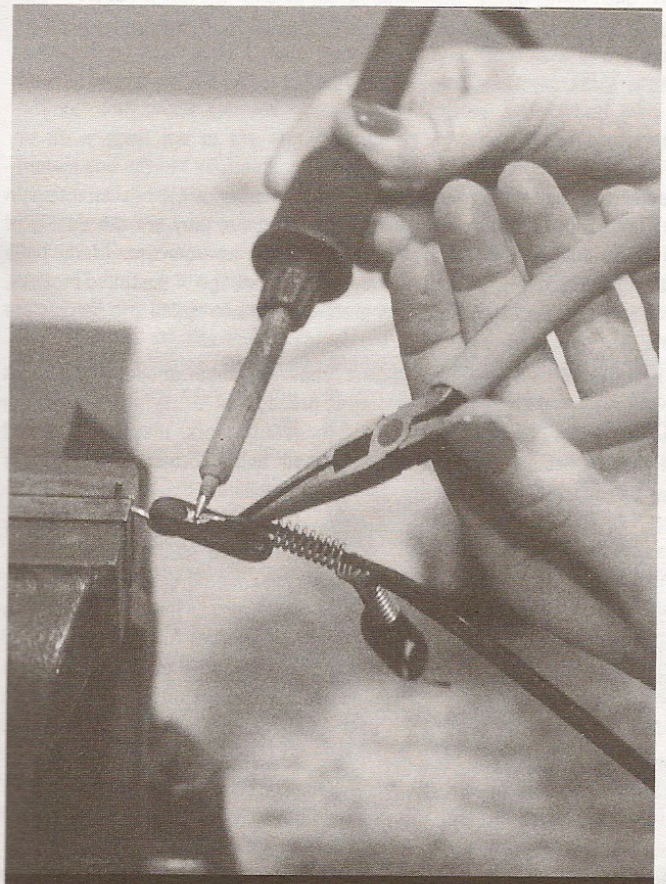
8. PULL WIRE THROUGH SPRING



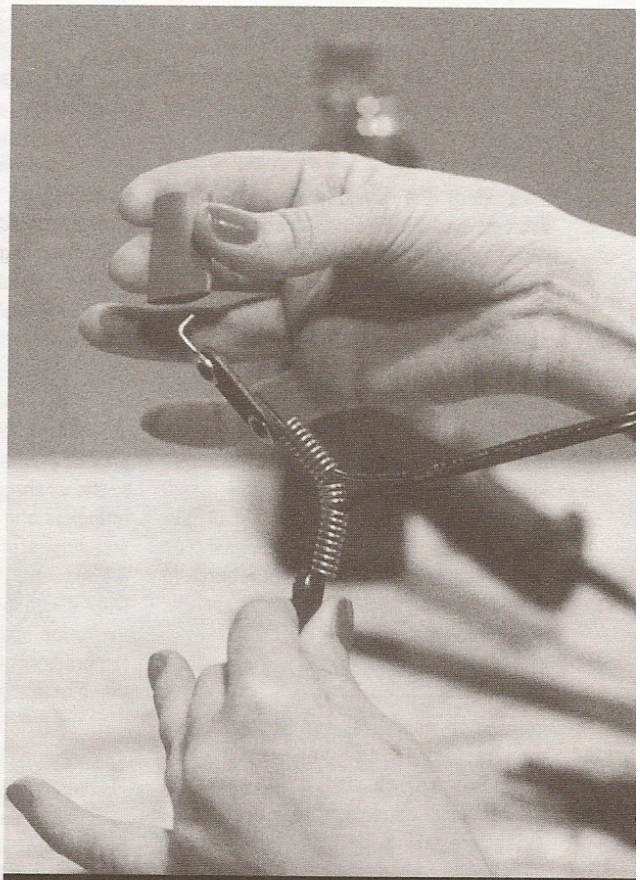
9. TIN WIRE ENDS

10. FEED WIRES THROUGH SPRING



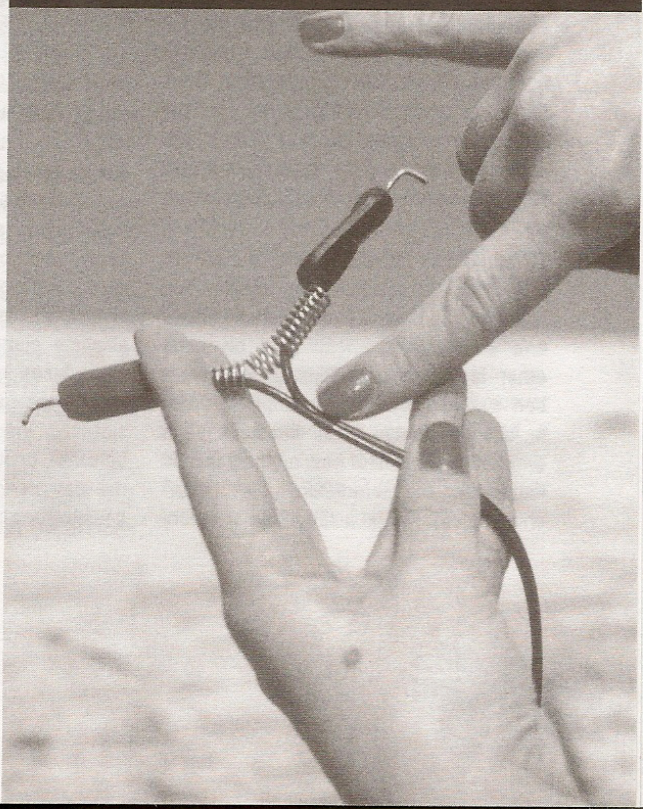


11. SOLDER WIRE TO SOLDER LUG



12. INSTALL HEATSHRINK OVER THE WIRE CONNECTION

13. HEATSHRINK INSULATION IN PLACE



14. FINISHED CLIPCORD REPAIR

ELVIS WAS A HILLBILLY 'TIL THE COLONEL CAME TO TOWN

By Dave Williams

Let's state the obvious, tattooing has evolved and changed dramatically from where it was ten or twenty years ago. That's not the issue. The reason for this article, is that a part of the industry hasn't noticed the changes, or rather speaks like it has, but falls short on the applications of those changes in the actual studio.

Not only have the business and technical ends been changing but the attitudes and expectations of the clientele have, demanding a wider knowledge of the trade. There is a greater emphasis on professionalism and integrity in regards to sterile procedures and customer service, not needed in the past.

This once fragmented trade has developed itself into an industry, with associations, convention seminars, and suppliers and manufacturers directing themselves towards research and development of the technical aspects of the trade. Many artists are taking the initiative to change their habits converging with demands from health departments and governing bodies that are scrutinizing the industry and implementing new guidelines and bylaws.

This increase in awareness from within and attention from the public has put the industry more in demand. This is obvious from the amount of shops operating. With the increase come benefits to the industry, as well as problems. The size of the trade and lack of any sort of regulating present in the industry puts it in a precarious position.

Whether for the long term benefit to tattooing or not this popularity and scrutiny has put more pressure on the studio space and shop management than on most other facets of the industry. No longer can a studio work on an unprofessional or unsophisticated level. Clients have a greater awareness of how a studio should look within the parameters of a "clean" environment. Health inspections are more frequent with inspectors better informed and educated. The health departments have long ago resigned themselves to the idea of tattooing sticking around and so are releasing general guidelines and recommendations. These guidelines now are becoming the models for the laws and regulations to come.

With this in mind the studio now needs to provide proper and responsible information to the client and thorough training to the tattooists and staff to stay in respectable standing professionally. This can set a precedent to any further policy making from the respective departments allowing the tattoo community itself to be a part of the process rather than being restricted by inane or irrelevant laws.

THE SHOP

The tattoo shop environment should be a simple planned out space that allows both work and people to flow easily through it. A work area that is either semi or totally private with ample room to maneuver, a separate machine and needle making area that allows for minor machine work to be done without compromising the cleanliness of the work area. A scrub/ sterile area away from the work area, again with separate areas for cleaning and packaging tools and another for sorting and drying of sterile tools. And yes a bathroom, lobby and counter area. Of course each studio space will essentially need to be personalized and fitted for the type of work being done, street shop or custom "by appointment only" studio. In any event the shop needs plenty of storage space and simplicity in its design, two factors that will alleviate clutter and confusion. Any and all surfaces in the studio should be made of non-porous and readily cleaned hard surfaces, many areas go through a flux between contaminated and clean during the day needing to withstand constant caustic surface cleaning.

Two factors draw a client's attention in selecting a studio, they are the quality of work, and the environment. Many have little or no knowledge of the tattoo process, therefore the studio space and service are the deciding factors.

An increasing number of clients ask about sterile procedures or to see the studio prior to getting work, they want to feel guaranteed and informed on the steps taken for their safety.

Single use needles are standard policy for any worthwhile studio; an autoclave, ultrasonic cleaner, hard surface cleaners, latex or nitrile gloves (nitrile being a new standard in hospitals and clinics as well as the best alternative to latex), an ample supply of barrier products and disposables are all daily essentials. A separate scrub area and a well-lit organized workspace help maintain standards and manageability of the studio, everything with its own place uncluttered and separated.

By providing these essentials the studio creates a safe environment to work in. If you aren't working clean around your clients you aren't working clean around yourself. Not that there is more disease today than in the past, not that there are more potential risks in the studio, and certainly not that the process itself is any more complicated, it is simply that the industry is and should be more aware. The amount of technical and medical information available today is staggering; any form of ignorance on the part of the studio or the tattooist is pathetic, lazy and unprofessional.

All professional studios should have policies that are steadfast and unforgiving when it pertains to cross contamination and sterilization procedures. Shop spaces should be in a constant state of repair, with any wear or tear being taken care of immediately so sterile procedures or work methods aren't compromised.

COUNTER STAFF

In a tattoo studio before a client should make a decision, a great deal of information needs to be relayed. Sizing, styles, pricing, advantages and disadvantages to the particulars. This means a lot of seemingly dry dialogue over the course of a day. A client needs to feel comfortable and confident in the studio's staff, humming, hawing or bad attitudes from the part of the counter staff won't gain the trust needed to do a good job in the studio. Proper, honest and upfront information puts people at ease, making the tattooer's job easier whether dealing with artwork or the client directly. The studio needs counter staff that will exceed the expectations of their clients. Being the front line in the studio, the counter staff's attitude, knowledge, abilities and the dedication they have to the studio and industry are going to be apparent right from the door.

It seems that some tattoo studios feel that there can be leniency on the quality of service in the studio just because it's a "tattoo shop" and that's the way it is. Maybe it's the romantic notion twisted from myth, at a time when the tattooer probably was the only person in the shop, and custom artwork was unheard of - they wouldn't have had the time for consultations or options, they were as helpful as they could be. Now with the expectations on artwork and the time needed to complete that work, counter staff have become essential in the studio. With studios having a counter person, it is possible to satisfy the endless questions and needs of a client, not to only get their business but to have the opportunity to do good work and change the view of the industry as a whole.

The duties of the counter staff can go beyond helping clients; a studio space needs to be kept clean and orderly. Regular organization is needed. Counter staff should be expected to handle basic cleaning, mopping and wiping of communal surfaces, organization of the counter and lobby area, restocking supplies needed for the work area as well as restocking the work space itself. They should basically be in control of the space on a daily basis: bookings, general client help, cleaning. All this keeps tattooing separate from the business end allowing the tattooer to concentrate on the work and the drawing.

With the responsibility of managing the studios "cleanliness", counter staff need to be trained on proper procedures in the scrub area and respective areas around the studio, keeping themselves and the others in the space safe. A safe sterile environment needs a dedicated system and method. How to clean specific surfaces without recontaminating them using specific products and sequenced tasks, how and why to use equipment like autoclaves and ultrasonics. Proper training ensures that at no time is any one thing in the sterile chain being compromised putting anyone at risk, client or staff.

With the concentration and care needed in today's studios, trained counter staff are essential.

GRAND POOH-BAH SHOP OWNER

In an industry that has its interests in several worlds; retail, medical, and art; a great deal of planning and organization is required. You have to sell tattoos to survive yet you won't survive long without integrity and foresight. The shop owner needs to recognize any insufficiencies that the studio may have over time and be willing to rectify any problems quickly.

Renovations and improvements are costly and frequent in a busy studio. The volume of traffic most studios get creates a lot of wear and tear. Broken equipment, chipped paint, furniture and common tool replacement all take their toll on the profit of a studio. A business needs to plan for these and other expenses by setting aside a portion of the profits specifically for that purpose. Shop owners are ultimately the ones responsible; they need to be willing to sacrifice a certain amount of their profit to the studios needs. The shop owner who works in the studio, generating his/her own income is in the best position. Most studios are run with high overhead leaving little to pay for multiple employees who aren't directly bringing in their own money. Tattooers are generally paid in percentages, the remainder going to supplies, bills, and counter wages; this again leaves little for the renovations and improvements.

A studio run by a person who is not involved in the trade is like getting tattooed by someone who isn't tattooed, it doesn't make sense. You need to understand and respect the business; it isn't a retail-clothing store or a car wash, the care for the work and client are ultimate in the equation. The owner who is involved in tattooing will recognize any disadvantages and be willing to improve as the trade improves, seeing and caring about the end benefit to the studio and clientele. One disadvantage the trade has seen in the last several years is the amount of people getting involved seeing only the money as the payoff. This has birthed studios that are willing to sacrifice judgement and proper procedures for the almighty dollar, totally disregarding the higher standards and respect the trade is entitled to. The payoff is in the work and the client's satisfaction whether it be a small job or a sleeve. "Oh the ideals of youth", the people in the trade that have lasted and are accomplished are the ones who made those sacrifices and cared enough to realize where the importance lay, in the work not in them. The payoff being the body of work over time and the respect from doing the work to the best of your abilities.

The integrity of the studio comes with the abilities of those that work in the studio. Any monkey can lay on a job, however it takes experience, direction, and a conscience to lay on a good piece of work. Tattooing is no nine to five job. For every hour you tattoo you are probably going to

spend another half an hour or more prepping - making needles, drawing, bitching, machining or complaining. Time you aren't getting paid for. The shop owner and the artist need to see the importance of apprenticeships and training. These put the emphasis on the aspects of the trade that are invaluable and often missed or taken for granted initially by those that haven't had the experience of an apprenticeship. Not to give any disrespect to those of you who are self taught or thrown in to learn from experience; wouldn't you have rather taken the long road learning the right ways the first time? Also not saying that apprenticeships should necessarily be sanctioned or regulated, only that they will create a constant in the trade that will in the long run bring better work overall, as well as weed out the people who don't have the drive or dedication it takes to tattoo everyday as a career.

The industry needs to reflect an intelligent and sophisticated ideal if it is to survive and benefit from its renaissance through regulation and its new face in the public eye. Regulation changes put more strain on the income of a shop, having to increase its spending on disposables and sterile procedure products. There is no way around it. Eventually if the individual shop doesn't make provision for this, the local health department will. In the event the shop owner that has voluntarily gone above and beyond the legal demands and more importantly, health demands of the work area will be the one in the best position to assist in the regulating. By using the initiative the industry will have its own say in it's future.

All in all, tattoo shops that don't care only make the good shops look better. Good work ain't cheap and cheap work ain't good. Providing the essentials, a well stocked and provisioned work space, caring informed counter staff, integrity in the work, and an environment that is geared towards the work, all make for a well run shop that will succeed in bringing back the clients for more work and creating a positive view of our industry. It will attract tattooers that care about the shop and their work.

The romance that is attributed to the "old school" tattoo shop won't revive itself, the industry and its foremost advocates have taken it far from the dark ages of sponge and buckets. What was once cutting edge and progressive has become standard issue in the shops of today. The ideals on art, business and cleanliness that artists implemented 10 or 20 years ago have shown us the basis for our beginnings. It is up to us to take it a step further and be open to change and research that can benefit the end result, and the client in the future. In the end it's about the tattoo and not about us, as long as we have done the job right to best of our abilities and with the most that is available to us. **MGM**

TATTOOING'S TARNISHED GOLDEN AGE

WHEN IT WAS FOLK ART NOT HIGH ART

By Kathryn Smythe

It was 1981 the very first time I walked into a tattoo shop - I was 14 yrs old. The building looked like a decrepit Victorian house and was located in a seedy part of town. The shop, if you could call it that, was identified only by a two storey high sign painted on the side. It simply said TATTOOS. At the bottom was an arrow pointing to a cellar door. Standing in front of that house twenty years ago was a turning point in my life. I screwed up my courage, walked down those steps and opened the door on a world that fascinated and captivated me ever since.

I remember that it took a minute for my eyes to adjust to the dim light coming from a single naked bulb, hanging over a stained, oil cloth covered work bench. When I looked down I saw a dirt floor.

At that young age this was definitely the scariest place I had ever been. It was frightening in the way a roller coaster is, exhilarating with the sense that anything could and may happen. I didn't get tattooed that day. I waited one more year, and got my first piece in a place with a marginally cleaner and more pleasant atmosphere.

These shops were at the tail end of the old school era. Both of them are long gone now, and thankfully much has changed since then. I must say good riddance to the ignorance that allowed tattooing to carry on with a complete lack of knowledge regarding sanitary procedure. However, I believe that as recently as ten years ago, when you walked into a tattoo shop you were instantly aware that you had entered a whole different realm of experience.

Today there is a greater understanding of the sterile chain of events, the need for clean and contaminated zones and in many areas legislation toward the one client/ one environment model. While these changes are necessary for the security of all those involved in the process, I feel that in the "cleaning up" of the whole experience, something is being lost.

What were your first experiences and remembrances of tattoo shops? Why were certain shops memorable? What were some of the most interesting uses of space you've come across? What were the funniest or most inventive props you've seen or perhaps used yourself? What made a tattoo shop feel like a tattoo shop? Is that really lost, or is it just different? **MGM**

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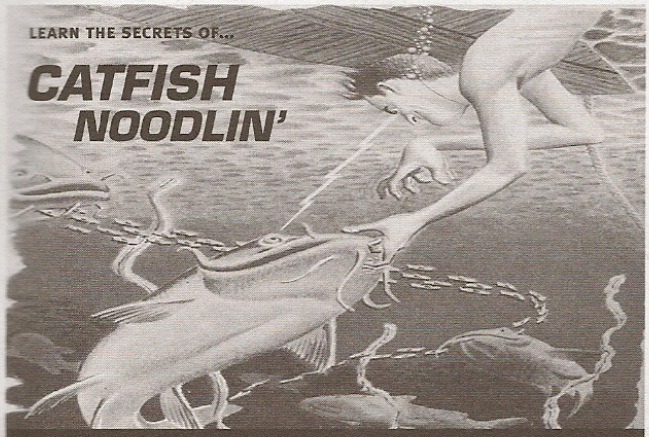

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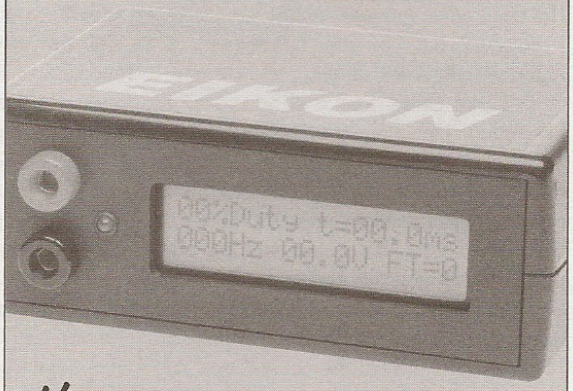

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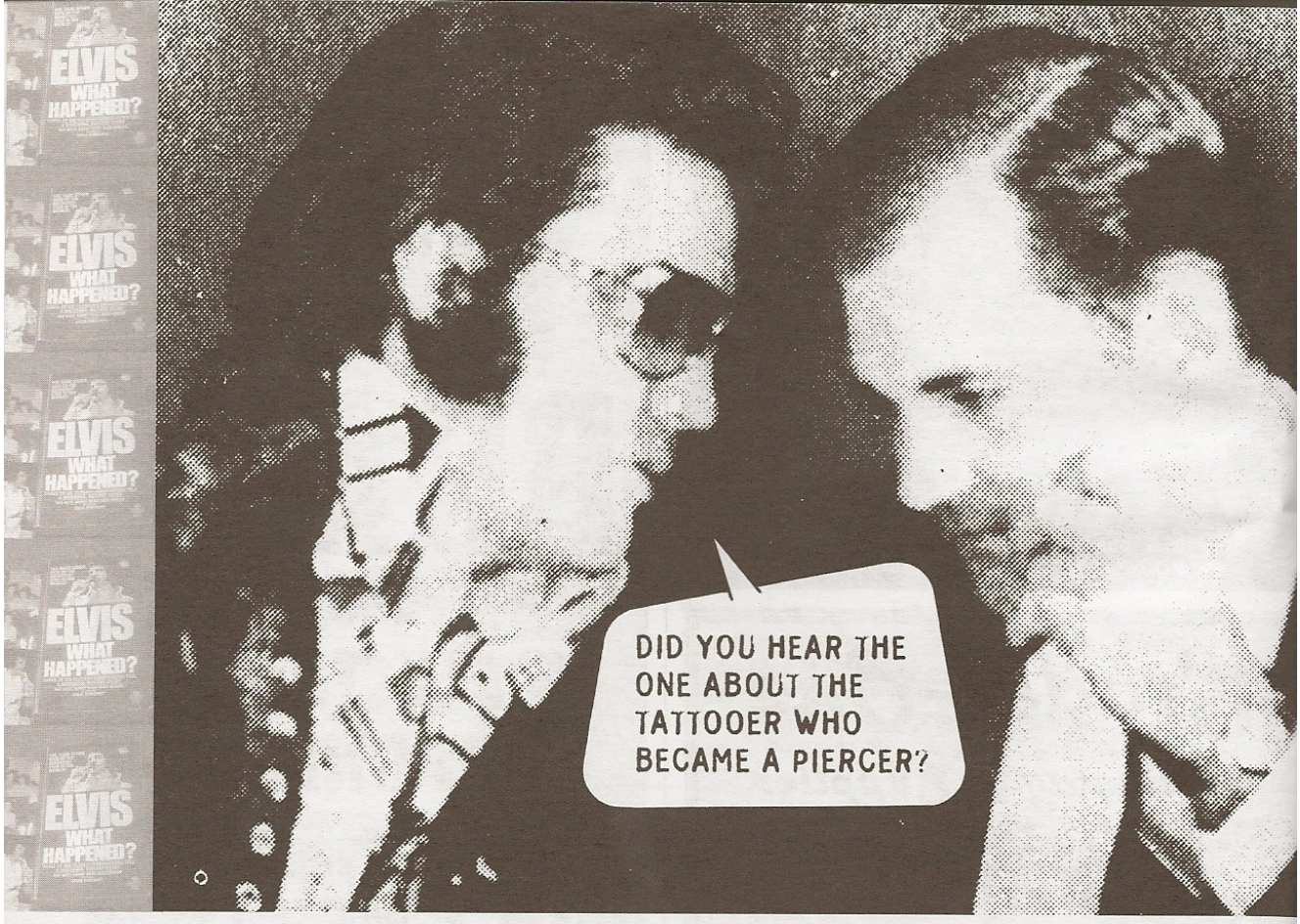

TATTOOING, WHAT HAPPENED?

By Bill Baker

Did you hear the one about the tattooer who became a piercer? No, you didn't, because that's not the way it happened. A lot of piercers became tattooers, and it wasn't like there was a shortage of tattooers when it happened. Did people bring piercing into tattoo shops because there was something missing in the trade? If there was something missing in tattooing, it was probably integrity, not piercing. Like any of the sidelines in tattoo shops, it's about making more money. If the piercers could draw and wanted to be tattooers, don't you figure they would have been tattooers not piercers in the first place? Maybe not, because once no one would take on apprentices, the easiest way into a shop, and the trade, was to become a piercer first. Some shop owners have always had a profit-motivated, destructive desire to water-down the trade, then lament its wateriness loudly. Where do they think all the piercer-turned-tattooers came from? They hired them, that's where.

In the mid-nineties, something amazing happened. At that time, a few tattooers had made some pretty good money selling flash. All of a sudden everybody was drawing up sheets of flash, color copying it and trying to sell it at conventions. Most of this stuff was drawn and colored so badly, they were lucky to even trade a set of it with someone else, for an equally lousy set. They were all sure they would make a ton of dough. What they did do was make a couple of things painfully obvious. The first thing was that a lot of tattooers really don't draw very well, and wouldn't recognize a good drawing if it was tattooed into them. By the same token, a lot of them wouldn't recognize a bad drawing if it was tattooed into them. This brief but amusing flash selling frenzy also exposed the pack mentality that's prevalent in tattooing. If any tattooer is doing something, they all want in on it. If it requires too much effort, then they're off in search of any new scrap of coolness, or the next big thing. If the top dogs are saying suppliers are bad, then they're all saying it. Some magazines won't accept ads from tattoo suppliers, but will accept ads from medical and piercing suppliers, who sell supplies used in tattooing. If we end up with companies from outside of tattooing supplying the trade but putting nothing back into it, and there are more tattooers than customers, who will be complaining the most? The ones who made it that way, that's who. I'm not saying who should be tattooing, selling flash or even selling supplies, but tattooers need to use some critical judgement. What's happened to tattooing... is what the trade has allowed to happen.

MGM

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Medium weight bar controls speed while maintaining proper point gap and stroke length.

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Maximum size bar gives maximum weight to slow machine down without need of increasing point gap or stroke length.

Tru-Spring

PERFORMANCE

If you want it from your tattoo machine you've got to get it first in your springs and armature bar. Tru-Spring™ armature bars and springs are manufactured under exacting quality control conditions on modern machinery to give you the ultimate in performance. Speed-controlling weighted armature bars in conjunction with the widest range of spring gauges in the industry ensure you can get your machine running right.

Rust resistant black oxide finish gives your machines the performance look. All bars available in long or short length.

Springs and bars sold individually or in complete kits. Look for Tru-Spring™ products at your tattoo supply shop – or call Eikon™.

Call **800.427.8198**

WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?

What actually is the function of the rear coil on a tattoo machine? I know the coil cores run through a cycle of being magnetized and un-magnetized. At the beginning of a cycle, if the front coil receives current first and therefore becomes magnetized first, it would seem to me that by the time the rear coil becomes magnetized, the cycle would be nearing its end and that the rear coil really wouldn't be doing much. Wouldn't one heavily wrapped coil work more efficiently?

J.M.I.A.

No it wouldn't. Although, it would seem like it should if you are not considering some of the fundamental properties of magnets.

One coil would be less efficient than a pair of coils, providing first of all, that the coils are wired properly, and secondly, that the machine the pair of coils are mounted in has a frame made of magnetically permeable material, or a yoke of magnetically permeable material is installed in the frame with the coils. Here's why.

Each coil is an electromagnet. Like a permanent magnet, an electromagnet has a north and a south pole. In an electromagnetic coil, the core becomes the magnet, with the north pole being either the top or the bottom of the coil core. The other end of the coil core is the other pole. To reverse the north and south polarity of our electromagnetic coil, we only have to reverse the wiring of it.

You may have noticed that there are two wires coming out of each coil. This is actually one wire, which is wound around the coil core. The number of layers of winding around the coil core is referred to as the number of "wraps" a coil has. Generally, one end of the wire comes through the base of the coil near the core. The other end of that wire comes through the base of the coil near the edge of the coil. One of these wire leads is positive and the other is negative. If we reverse the positive and negative circuit, the polarity of the magnet will also be reversed.

It is important to note that there is an equal amount of magnetism at the top of the coil core as there is at the bottom of the coil core.

The job of the electromagnets in a tattoo machine is to attract the armature bar. You can see, having half of the magnetism at the bottom of the coil core where the coil is mounted into the frame of the machine, is wasted energy. Only the top of the coil core can attract the armature.

The next thing to consider is - like poles on a magnet repel, and opposite poles on a magnet attract.

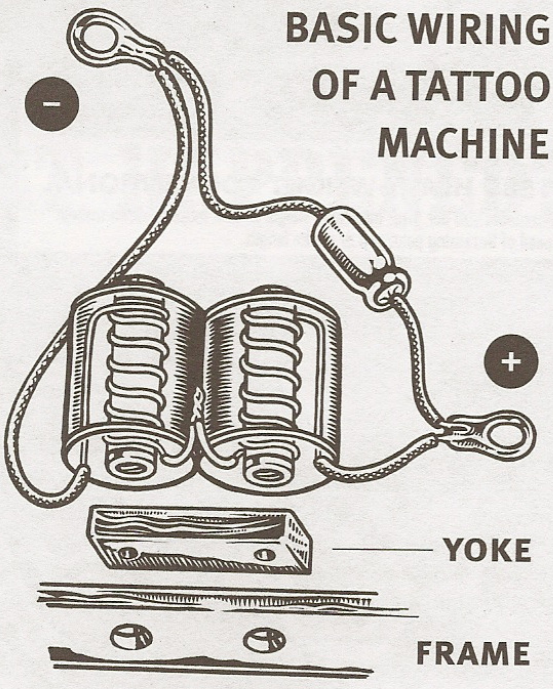
The yoke connects the coil cores, creating a horseshoe magnet. A horseshoe magnet brings all of the magnetism generated in both coils up to the top of the coil cores. Both coil cores are now connected and are in essence, one u-shaped coil core, so they are magnetized at the same time.

The coils are wired in a reversed circuit, so that the bottom of one coil core will be north, and the bottom of the other will be south, making the two electromagnets and the yoke, act as one horseshoe magnet.

If the frame of the machine is made of a magnetically permeable material (material that can be attracted to a magnet) such as steel or iron, then no yoke is needed for that machine to run efficiently. In those cases the frame acts as the yoke, creating a horseshoe magnet.

If the frame of the machine is made of a material that is not magnetically permeable, such as aluminum or brass, then a yoke must be used to make that machine run efficiently. Machines with frames made of a material that is not magnetically permeable will run without a yoke, but half of the magnetism created will be at the bottom of the coil cores.

MGM



- **The negative solder lug is insulated from the frame at the top binding post.**
- **The positive solder lug is insulated from the frame at the back binding post.**
- **The reversed wiring circuit of the two coils results in reverse polarity of the two electromagnets, allowing them to work in unison across the yoke, or machine frame, creating a horseshoe magnet.**

SPRING STOCK MATERIALS

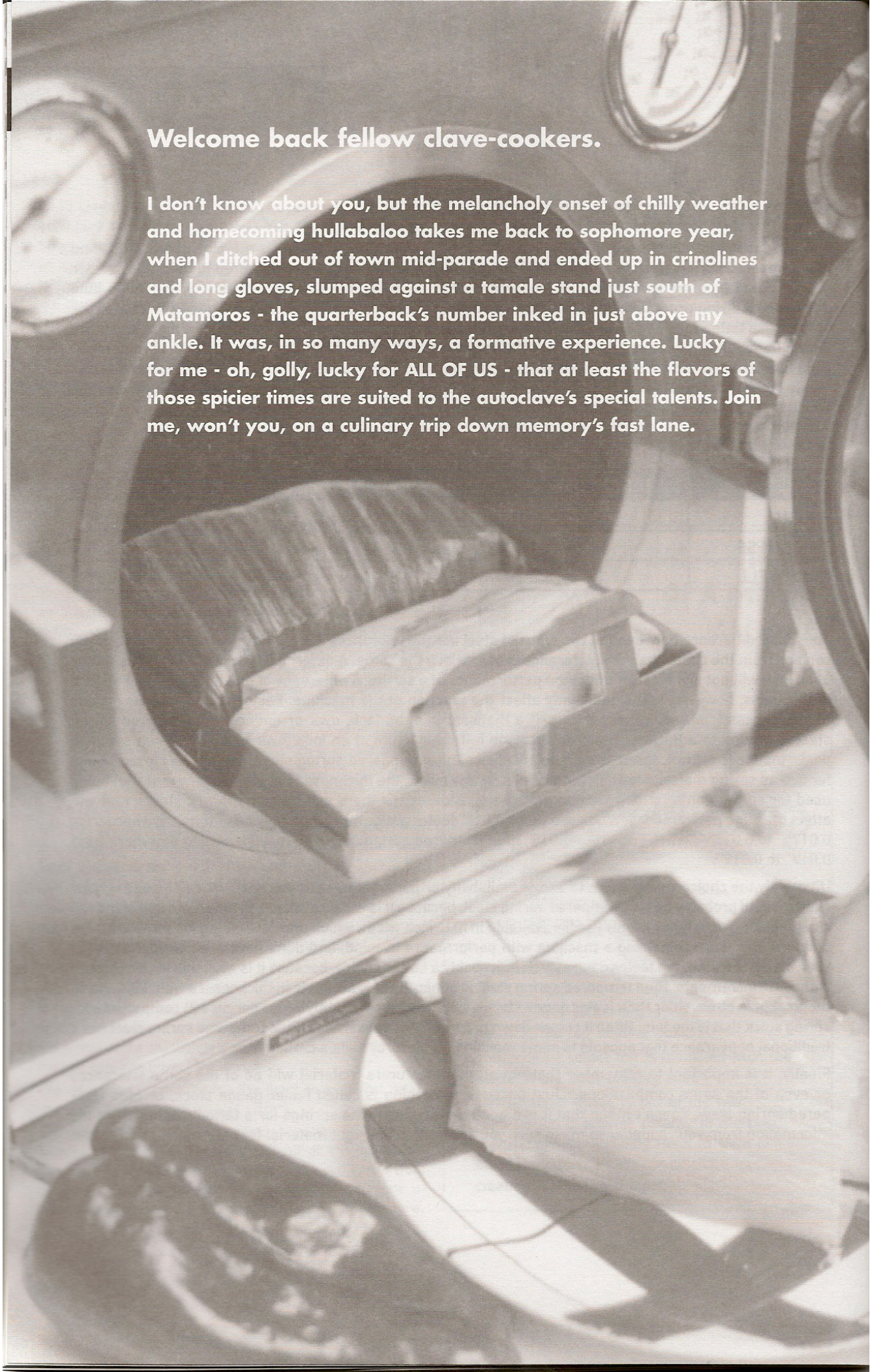
The two most commonly used materials for the springs in a tattoo machine are feeler gauge stock and blue tempered spring steel. Feeler gauge stock, as the name implies, is manufactured to be used as feeler gauge. Blue tempered spring steel is manufactured to be made into springs of many types, and is blue due to an oxidizing process used to increase corrosion resistance. Both materials are good choices for the springs in a tattoo machine as they are tempered to establish desired hardness, and have a high resistance to fatigue failure. Fundamentally they are the same material - both are categorized as high carbon steel. Blue tempered spring steel is designated as C1095 with a carbon content of 0.090 – 1.03%. Starrett feeler gauge stock is designated as W-1 with a carbon content of 1.0%. The only chemical difference between the two is that the feeler gauge stock contains a trace amount of chromium to increase corrosion resistance.

	STARRETT FEELER GAUGE STOCK	BLUE TEMPERED SPRING STEEL
WIDTH	+/- 0.002"	+/- 0.005"
THICKNESS	+/- 0.00043" – 0.00047"	+/- 0.00075" – 0.001"
ROCKWELL	C46 – C48	C48 – C51

The major difference between the two types of steel are the tolerances of their physical dimensions. As you can see from the chart, the width tolerance is essentially the same. A difference of a couple of thousandths of an inch will not significantly affect the performance of a spring. A difference of one thousandth of an inch in thickness, however, will significantly affect the function of the machine. Feeler gauge stock is ground to a thickness tolerance of less than half a thousandth of an inch, over or under. Blue tempered spring steel is ground to a thickness tolerance of one full thousandth of an inch, over or under. When machine performance is critical, the thickness tolerances of blue tempered spring steel may not be close enough for use as spring material for tattoo machines. In any event, the thickness tolerances of any material being used for springs on a tattoo machine must be considered, as there will be some inconsistency that will affect machine performance. When you order 0.018" feeler gauge stock, you may be getting anywhere from 0.0175" to 0.0185". When you order 0.018" blue tempered spring steel you may be getting anywhere from 0.017" to 0.019".

Ultimately the choice comes down to either availability or personal taste. If you are a machine builder, your choice would probably be blue tempered spring steel, because it is widely available in different widths and roll sizes. Feeler gauge stock is only readily available in half-inch width, which may be limiting for some machine builders. If you are rebuilding a machine with performance in mind, and don't have a lot of adjustment in your machine frame, the feeler gauge stock is probably a better choice, because it is available in thicknesses with .001" increments. Blue tempered spring steel is generally only available in thicknesses with .002" increments, but is often wider than feeler gauge stock. In some cases a slightly wider spring will compensate for spring stock that is too thin. Often it comes down to a matter of appearance. Blue tempered spring steel has a traditional appearance that appeals to some machine builders, or suits a certain frame style.

Finally, it is important to remember that not all manufacturers material will be of the same tolerances or even of the same compositions. Just because something is called feeler gauge stock, or blue tempered spring steel, doesn't mean that it is a good material to make springs for a tattoo machine. Get the information from your supplier to make sure you are getting the right material for your machine. **MGM**



Welcome back fellow clave-cookers.

I don't know about you, but the melancholy onset of chilly weather and homecoming hullabaloo takes me back to sophomore year, when I ditched out of town mid-parade and ended up in crinolines and long gloves, slumped against a tamale stand just south of Matamoros - the quarterback's number inked in just above my ankle. It was, in so many ways, a formative experience. Lucky for me - oh, golly, lucky for ALL OF US - that at least the flavors of those spicier times are suited to the autoclave's special talents. Join me, won't you, on a culinary trip down memory's fast lane.

Autoclave Cookbook

CHILI-CHEDDAR TAMALES WITH FRESH CORN

THESE VEGETARIAN TAMALES ARE A DEPARTURE FROM THE TRADITIONAL PORK-AND-LARD LADEN VARIETY. COMMITTED CARNIVORES ARE WELCOME TO SEND IN REQUESTS FOR A MEATIER VERSION.

FOR THOSE SAD SOULS WHO'VE NEVER BEEN SOUTH OF SIOUX CITY, MASA HARINA IS A CORN MEAL FLOUR MADE OF KERNELS THAT HAVE BEEN SOAKED IN SLAKED LIME AND MY DEAR, THERE JUST ISN'T ANY SUBSTITUTE. SO PHONE AROUND TO SPECIALTY FOOD STORES OR LATIN AMERICAN GROCERS TO FIND SOME. CHANCES ARE THEY'LL HAVE THE CORN HUSKS AND POBLANOS TOO. NOW ALL YOU NEED IS THAT OLD FLACO JIMENEZ RECORD YOUR EX GAVE YOU FOR YOUR 29TH BIRTHDAY, AND A SHOT OF TEQUILA TO STEADY YOUR HANDS.

12	DRIED CORN HUSKS
2	LARGE ROASTED POBLANO CHILIES, PEELED, SEEDED AND CHOPPED
1 CUP	MASA HARINA
1/4 CUP	BUTTER
3/4 TSP	SALT
1/2 TSP	BAKING POWDER
1/4 CUP	CHICKEN STOCK
2-1/2 CUPS	CORN KERNELS
1-1/2 CUP	SHREDDED OLD CHEDDAR CHEESE
PINCH	CHILI POWDER

SOAK CORN HUSKS IN LARGE BOWL OF WARM WATER FOR ABOUT 2 HOURS, UNTIL SOFT. TEAR 4 INTO 1/2-INCH STRIPS TO MAKE TIES.

PULSE MASA HARINA, BUTTER, BAKING POWDER AND HALF THE SALT IN FOOD PROCESSOR UNTIL CRUMBLY. PULSE IN CHICKEN STOCK. TRANSFER TO BOWL. PUT 1 1/4 CUPS CORN, 1/2 CUP OF THE CHEDDAR AND THE CHILI POWDER IN FOOD PROCESSOR; PUREE. STIR INTO MASA MIXTURE, ALONG WITH REMAINING CORN.

SPREAD ONE CORN HUSK ON TABLE. PUT ABOUT 1/3 CUP MASA MIXTURE IN CENTER AND MAKE A DENT ON TOP. FILL WITH 1 TBSP EACH POBLANOS AND CHEDDAR. PRESS DOUGH OVER TOP TO COVER AND GENTLY SHAPE INTO A LOG ABOUT 3 INCHES LONG. FOLD LONG SIDES OF CORN HUSK OVER FILLING TO ENCLOSE; TIE ENDS WITH STRIPS OF HUSK.

LINE AUTOCLAVE TRAY WITH A DOUBLE THICKNESS OF HEAVY DUTY ALUMINUM FOIL, AND PLACE TAMALES ON TOP. COOK ACCORDING TO INSTRUCTIONS ABOVE FOR 30 MINUTES.

MAKES 8 TAMALES.

TIP: MAKE A FRESH SALSA OF COARSELY MASHED AVOCADO, DICED RED ONION, PLUM TOMATOES, LIME JUICE AND CILANTRO TO SERVE ALONGSIDE. AND DON'T TRUST THE HALF-BACK EITHER.

Autoclave Cookery Basics

A few simple guidelines ensure successful results, every time.

1. Place food in container or foil as directed in the recipe. Place on shelf in the autoclave chamber.
2. Fill chamber. Set autoclave to sterilize and close.
3. Let autoclave come to 265°F. Pressure must show in the green range. Adjust to maintain temperature between 260 - 270°F.
4. Follow the cooking time as per the recipe, beginning as soon as temperature reaches 265°F.
5. When cooking time is complete, vent and remove food.
6. If any food or its liquids leak into the water in the chamber, drain the autoclave and refill with fresh water before using again.

We seriously recommend that if you plan to do any autoclave cookery, you have a separate autoclave that you use specifically for cooking. We are not responsible for any damage that may be caused by attempting to cook food in an autoclave.

LESS THAN 60 WORDS - FREE! GET YOUR MESSAGE OUT TO THE TRADE

Hopefully the classifieds will bring some of that old equipment out of trunks and boxes, and off to new homes, and a hot-rodded, souped-up second chance to get to work. Classified ads are a means for our readers to sell, trade and purchase items related to the tattooing trade. Machinegun Magazine reserves the right to edit, reformat, accept or reject all classified ads. Machinegun Magazine does not endorse any products being sold through the Classified Section and will not be held liable for the accuracy of descriptions. The responsibility of making contact, purchase and delivery of any item in our Classified Section lies on the individual who placed the ad and the individual who is interested in the item. Ads may be placed in more than one issue.

CLASSIFIEDS

Aaron Cain designed snowboards for sale 1000$ each or 1800$ a pair. These 2 boards were designed by Aaron Cain in 1995. They have the Gold "egiptomatic space junk" on them. They are brand-new and near impossible to get anywhere else. You can reach me at the shop: 303.286.8282 or online at: AaronDale@tattoos.com

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Customize your shop or station with handpainted goods. Toilet seats, glove box covers, power supply covers and more. For more info call or write: Carnie Marnie's Custom Goods & Services, 780 St. Remi, #144, Montreal, PQ, H4C 3H2. 514.934.5547. carniemarnie@sympatico.ca

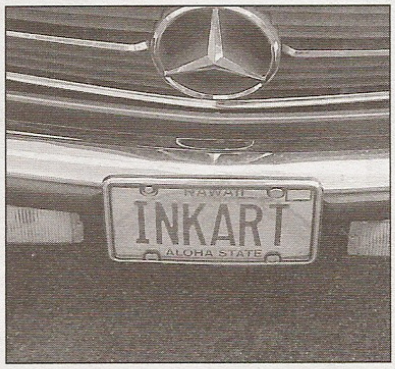
WANTED: Used & antique tattoo machine frames and old parts and such. Contact Chris Brock, c/o Lucky Devil Tattoo Parlor, 5153 S Ridgewood Ave., Port Orange, FL 32127 (386)756-8588

I have 2 machines for sale: 1 in aluminum with steel base, 10 wraps coils. Machine is running smooth, perfect for shading, in good condition. 1 in brass with steel base 10 wraps coils a bit heavier, smooth runnin and in good condition. Both hand made and not for beginners!!!!!!!! Bought them from a retiring artist and wanted to prevent them from getting into the wrong hands!!!!!! Asking $250 each Contact DAN at 1-450-375-6960

KEEP EM COMIN'...

WE WANT PHOTOS OF TATTOO RELATED VANITY PLATES - YOURS OR SOMEONE ELSE'S.

Entries can be mailed to: Machinegun Magazine, c/o Eikon Device Inc., 692 McKay Street, Kingston, ON, Canada K7M 7G2.



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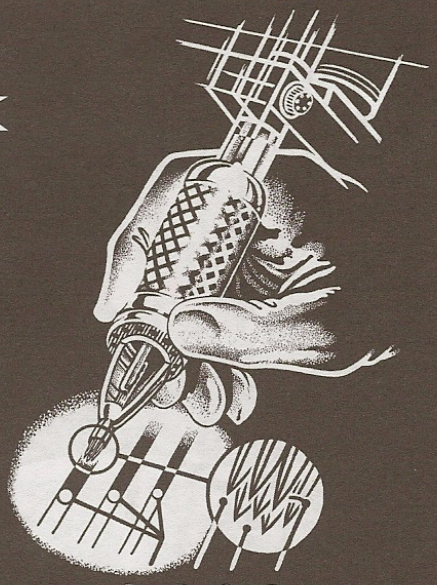
DOES YOUR OUTLINE LOOK AS GOOD AS IT SHOULD?



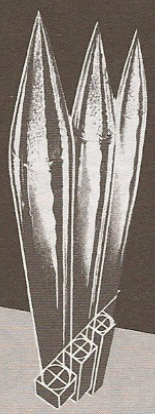
THE EIKON LINER SERIES

A. Three diameters of needle allow you to make a liner that is exactly the size you want. Each larger diameter of needle will give you a slightly larger configuration. That means you can get three sizes of any liner you use right now.

B. Manufactured of medical grade stainless steel. Every aspect of production from straightening to grinding, final inspection, measuring and hand packaging is done at Eikon.

C. Consistent needle spacing and line weight are due to precise needle shaft diameters.

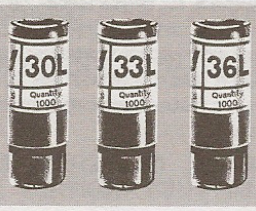
D. Reduced drag in the skin is achieved by exact diameter of needle in the skin-to-spacing ratio.



The Eikon L designation means a longer taper than our coloring and shading needles. The longer taper makes these needles specifically suited for outlining. The three diameters of needle allow you to make various sizes of the liners you use now. Instead of choosing between a "five" or "seven" you can use a tight, medium or heavy five, or a tight, medium or heavy seven. Get the solid black line and the exact line weight you want.

Even a needle that is designed to outline, must be engineered to tattoo. A well-engineered needle will tattoo better, delivering maximum pigment to the permanent layer of skin. Creating tattoos that look as good when they are years old, as they did the day they were done. There is no single perfect diameter or profile of needle for all types of tattooing. Yet it is a fact that the match between needle diameter and taper of the Eikon L series, makes them consistently precise as liners. The result is a dense black line that's easy to put in. The same engineered technology that has gone into our .30, .33 and .36 needles has gone into our .30L, .33L and .36L. The result is a complete line of needles designed to make your work look better, from outline to shading and coloring.

EIKON BLACKLINE



Tattoo needles designed to OUTLINE

Find out about our entire line of needles, needle bars, grommets, soldering equipment and supplies at www.eikondevice.com or call toll free 800.427.8198 to request a catalogue.

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CONGRATULATIONS *Mimsy Patten*

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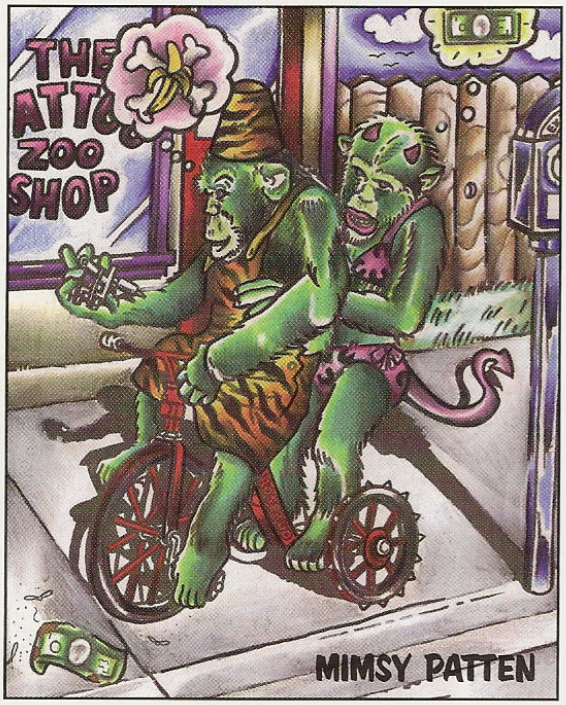

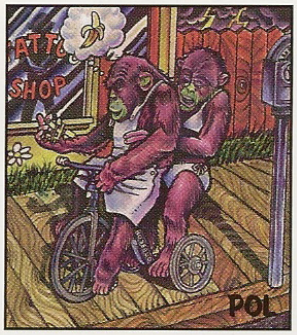

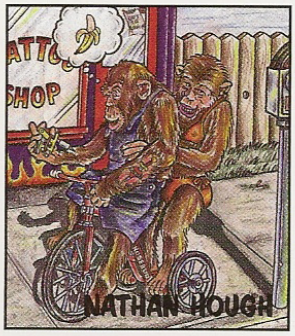

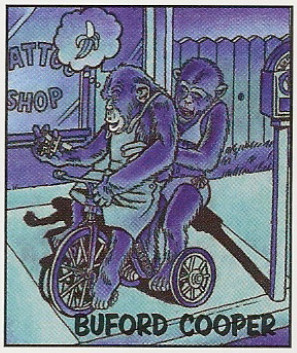

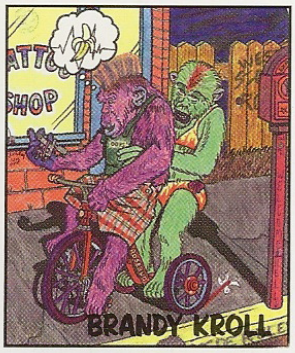

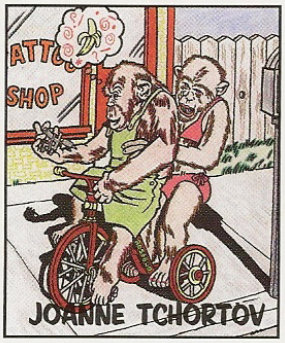

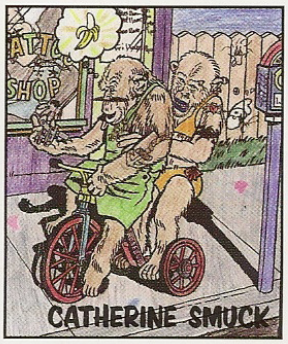

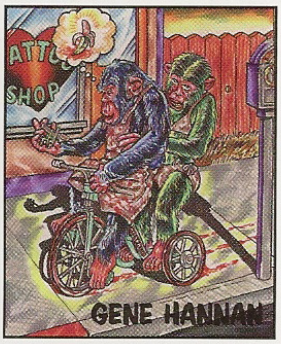

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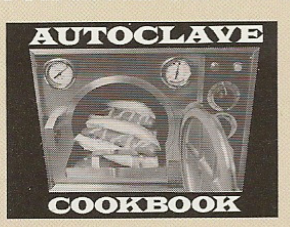
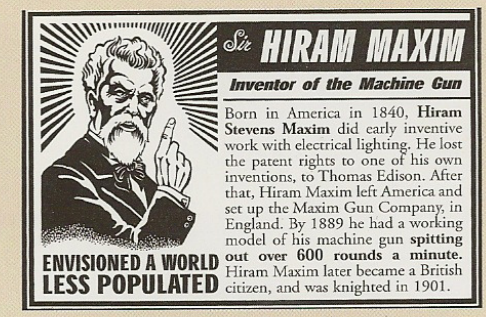


#1491 Autoclave Cookbook Shirt Come and get it! Politically incorrect. Pink on black.

#1543 Set of three. Jesus, Satan and Machinegun Magazine. So beautiful… so sick in its conception, they can't be split up. Wear all three at once. White on black.

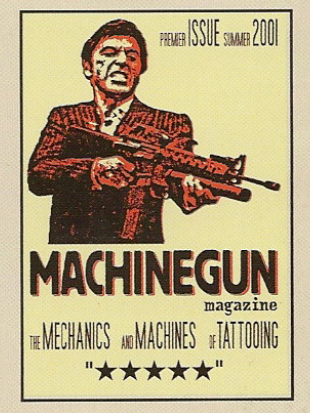
#1490 Machinegun Kid. There's nothing like kids with guns. White and red on black.


Sir HIRAM MAXIM
Inventor of the Machine Gun
Born in America in 1840, Hiram Stevens Maxim did early inventive work with electrical lighting. He lost the patent rights to one of his own inventions, to Thomas Edison. After that, Hiram Maxim left America and set up the Maxim Gun Company, in England. By 1889 he had a working model of his machine gun spitting out over 600 rounds a minute. Hiram Maxim later became a British citizen, and was knighted in 1901.
ENVISIONED A WORLD LESS POPULATED

#1489 Hiram Maxim Shirt. White on black.

#1544 Baby T. Red and white on black.

#1488 The Green Monster. Green and white on black.



#1550 Machinegun Mag Poster Red and black on off-white paper. Suitable for framing or wrapping fish. Hand silk-screened. 12″x 18″.

#1492 Tony Machinegun Hot Rod Tattoo Machine Bible. Off- white and off-orange on black.

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